UNIONIST POLICY

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UNIONIST POLICY

AND OTHER ESSAYS

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BY THE RIGHT HON.

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TO

M. E. S.

PREFACE

Most, though not all, of the essays contained in this volume have already appeared in various magazines. My thanks are due to the Editors of *The Oxford and Cambridge Review* (in which the majority appeared), *The Nineteenth Century*, *The Fortnightly*, and *The National Review*, for leave to reproduce articles which they respectively published, and to the Editor of *The Times* for permission to reprint the letter contained in the Appendix. Papers written under these circumstances are necessarily fugitive, but these are collected in the hope that they have not yet exhausted their short space of life.

Mr Maurice Woods has given me much assistance in preparing the book for the press, and Mr Cyril Potter has been good enough to draw up the Index.

F. E. SMITH.

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UNIONIST POLICY

I

THE FUTURE OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The successful fusion of the two wings of the Unionist army has now been accomplished. The importance of this proceeding lies in matters of ritual rather than in those of doctrine. For ten years there has been no vital difference of opinion between Liberal Unionists and Conservatives, but none the less two separate organisations have existed side by side. Certain constituencies have been preserved for Liberal Unionist activity and two completely separate staffs have devoted themselves to organisation in the constituencies. This process was costly, inconvenient, and productive of overlapping. It is even reported that one enterprising candidate at the last election, under circumstances not fully made clear, obtained the whole of his electioneering expenses from each war chest.[1] On every ground it is certain that greater efficiency will be secured by the change. Many persons, however, would have regretted a little the disappearance, if it were destined to disappear, of the term "Conservative" in the official

[1] It is, perhaps, unfortunate that this gentleman was not elected.

party label, and we may therefore congratulate ourselves on its retention. Not that I should have objected personally, if a party—hereafter united in form as well as in substance—had been described by the single word "Unionist." I do not share the common objection to this description. It is sometimes said that the Home Rule controversy will one day be settled, and that it will then be a little absurd that one of the great parties in the State should be distinguished by a title derived from an exhausted controversy. But this fear is surely based upon a view too narrow. The term "Unionist" had its origin no doubt in the Irish controversy, but it has derived a more permanent and world-wide significance from the great campaign which Mr Chamberlain, the true founder of the Liberal Unionist Party, inaugurated in the cause of Imperial Unity. As long as the Tariff victory has still to be won, as long as, having been won, it must be maintained, the term "Unionist" will possess a vital and living appropriateness to the only party which has devoted itself to the prosecution of these ideas. But none the less it would, I think, have been a misfortune if "Conservative" had been laid aside, because it embodies what has been in the past, and must remain in the future, a powerful, and perhaps even a dominant, element in the counsels of the constitutional party. It never was true to say that the Conservative Party consisted only of men who were in the main satisfied in the political field with things as they were; it never was true and it never will be, as long as we live under democratic government. But it is indisputably true that the views of men who contemplate every considerable change with instinctive aversion, have greatly influenced Conservative policy in every generation, have not infrequently exercised a decisive control over it,

and must always be most attentively and respectfully considered when decisions of party policy are recorded. This circumstance is reflected clearly and appropriately in the word "Conservative." No sensible Unionist will regard it with any feeling but that of satisfaction. We live in a country which has a long and illustrious history; the accumulated experience of centuries teaches us many lessons, conspicuous among them the lesson that it is easier to destroy than to construct, and that it is infinitely more dangerous. Whether our present system be ideally satisfactory or not, we understand it, and in the main we are cognisant of its disadvantages, whereas none of us can confidently predict what will be the effect of change. We may conjecture, we may even prophesy; all politicians do, but none of us can be sure. A strong section of public opinion will, therefore, always support the school of thought which insists ever more strenuously on exacting the uttermost onus of proof from those who rashly assail institutions which, however faulty, have in the main responded to our national necessities. And this view is sane, reasonable, and deserving of encouragement. An embryonic, unsettled or inconsiderable State may make experiments without incurring the charge of extreme rashness, just as a deeply embarrassed business man may attempt to retrieve his fortunes by a hazardous speculation. An old and highly civilised country will do well to remember the eloquence, and imbibe the spirit of Burke. The description "Conservative" was a happy and constant reminder of these familiar truths. But the term was in any case bound to survive whether officially recognised or not. You may establish a censorship of plays, but it is infinitely more difficult to establish a censorship over our daily vocabulary. Millions of Englishmen have always called themselves Conservatives, and it may be

doubted whether an Act of Parliament, much less a Party resolution, could end an incorrigible habit.

But the formal consummation of a fusion, which has long been substantially complete, affords a convenient moment for speculation upon the future of this powerful political party. What is to be its policy in the strange and uncharted political seas over which we are drifting? Will it play a part comparable to its illustrious past? Will it often again dominate the political world in the sense that it will form strong Governments to maintain and spread its own traditions, or is it destined after one or more periods of office to become stereotyped in the shape of a permanent, even though a powerful, opposition, moulding the policy of its opponents by its parliamentary cohesion and strength, but never, or only at rare intervals of reaction, sufficiently numerous to command the support of parliamentary majorities? Ten years ago these questions would have seemed superfluous and even ludicrous. Few politicians to-day will dismiss them as merely pessimistic. They certainly merit inquiry. Ten years ago there were only two parties in the State.[1] The vicissitudes of politics made it certain that, within a period not unduly prolonged, the activities of the Government in power would produce hostility, to be followed by reaction, and lead in the sequel to decline and defeat. An agreeable alternation of office and opposition was the destiny of the great political parties. The situation to-day is wholly different. The personal incompetence of the Labour Members, and their entire lack of touch with the great industrial movement in the country, will blind only superficial people to the sinister possibilities which underlie the surface of modern politics. New and deep-seated movements, imperfectly under-

[1] The Irish exception was apparent rather than real, and does not affect the argument.

stood, hardly diagnosed at all, are rapidly introducing incalculable elements into English politics. Armed with what equipment, inspired by what coherent and considered policy does the Conservative Party face the convulsions with which it will assuredly be confronted? We may attempt to answer this question by laying down a series of indisputable propositions, and then proceeding to examine others more doubtful, but hardly less insistent in their claim for consideration. It is abundantly clear that there exist in the Conservative Party quite distinct schools of political thought. The tasks of opposition promote consolidation; for all of us are united in distrusting and detesting the schemes of the present Government. It is in power and not in opposition that domestic political differences assume a serious and public aspect. I am satisfied that the points upon which all Unionists agree greatly outnumber and wholly exceed in importance the points on which they disagree. The obvious and fundamental points can be quite shortly dismissed.

The Conservative Party always has been, and always will be, distinguished by a resolute insistence upon the most complete preparations for national defence. No one could belong to the Conservative Party who, even in this age of appalling competitive expenditure, is unprepared to err upon the right side, who fails to recognise that, great as our expenditure is and must continue to be, it is an inconsiderable insurance premium in relation to the immensity of the interests thereby secured. We may justly feel pride that no temptation to embarrass the Government even in these years of bitter political controversy has ever deflected the Unionist Party from the only road of honour and patriotism. We have opposed the Government when we believed their preparations to be inadequate; we have protected them against

their own unpatriotic supporters whenever they have duly recognised the national necessities. We shall continue to take this course, and in doing so we shall enjoy the support of a large and stable section of public opinion. We shall have behind us those who very rightly treat national defence as the first of all questions, and who will naturally support a party, unanimous, patriotic, and unembarrassed by dependence upon the votes of those who sincerely believe to-day that the German Navy is the product of English Chauvinism. The problems of military defence, though a little more difficult, find the Conservative Party almost equally united in essentials. For my own part, I have always advocated compulsory national training. I am satisfied that it will be ultimately accepted by the nation as necessary, and I have never hesitated in a large democratic constituency to make my views clear. But it would be folly to ignore the practical difficulties which many of our own friends put forward in opposition to its immediate adoption by the party as an object of proximate policy. The people of these islands are not fundamentally unpatriotic, but they have been chloroformed into security by politicians of both parties; they have been taught to believe that the strength of our Navy discharges us from those civic responsibilities which are ungrudgingly recognised by almost every free democracy in the world. It would, I think, have been possible to have established a judicious system of compulsory service amongst selected persons at the time of the South African War. It would be infinitely more difficult to-day, and the object of those who vehemently believe in its necessity will be defeated and not forwarded by a premature attempt to force such proposals down the throat of an unconvinced electorate. The pressing need of the moment is for conversion, and a deep responsibility lies with the Conservative Party—the overwhelming

majority of whose members in my judgment is convinced that national military training would develop our manhood, and immeasurably augment our national security—to re-enforce the efforts which Lord Roberts, with splendid persistency and courage, is constantly making to convince his countrymen of our military necessities.

The next great subject upon which there is no real difference of opinion in the Conservative Party to-day is the relationship between Great Britain and the self-governing Colonies. We are committed as a party to the policy of Tariff Reform, and to the principal object of Tariff Reform, the development in the best interests of all of the component parts of the Empire. Opinion has consolidated within the party more rapidly and more completely upon this than upon any subject which has given rise to deep-seated domestic controversy within recent history. So far as I know the only two members of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons who entertain any serious doubt as to the policy of the party, are Lord Hugh Cecil and Lord Robert Cecil. They are two of its most brilliant members, and I hardly know two Conservative members who have greater claims upon the friendly consideration and sympathy of their fellow Conservatives. It is, therefore, important to notice, and it is almost insulting even to point out, that they yield to no member of the party in their devotion to the Empire and in their appreciation of our Imperial responsibilities, and they have both made it clear that while they are distrustful as to the consequences of some part of our Tariff proposals, these differences count for nothing with them when weighed in the balance with the supreme importance of a restoration of Unionist Government, and a reversion to saner and more reputable policy.

There are other subjects upon which so complete a degree of unanimity exists among Unionists that it is almost superfluous even to enumerate them. The party is lineally descended from the older party which, through many vicissitudes of politics and dynasties, redeemed an outlook upon affairs, otherwise often narrow and bigoted, by constant loyalty to the monarchy. It is not necessary, and certainly it is not desirable, to charge any great party in the State with lukewarmness towards the institution of monarchy, but it is very necessary to point out that no party can degrade the prerogative, as the Government did in the veto crisis, without grave jeopardy to the whole monarchical institution. It is probable that on a further but cognate subject substantial unanimity exists in the Conservative Party. A complete reform of the Second Chamber is now inevitable. It must and will be a condition of this reform that the decisions of the reformed Chamber shall not be liable to be submerged by a nominal exercise of the prerogative under the advice of an unprincipled Government. There was much to be said for the existence of such a prerogative in the days when, if exercised at all, it would have been exercised by the Sovereign upon an independent initiative. No argument whatever can be adduced in its support when it merely records the decrees of a Coalition Government living from hand to mouth. This is not the place to attempt a detailed forecast of the Unionist policy for the reform of the Second Chamber. It is possible that the constitution, if reformed under a Unionist Government, will present little more resemblance to the proposals of Lord Lansdowne than even to the provisions of the Parliament Act; but it may be confidently predicted that for the future any such revolutionary exercise of the prerogative as was effected in the crisis of August

1911 will be rendered impossible. No great difference of opinion should arise, or is likely to arise, in the Conservative Party when called upon to present a scheme for the reform of the Second Chamber. We are all agreed upon what is essential, even though there is room for almost infinite variety of opinion as to the steps which may be necessary to secure the common object. What is essential is that we should be afforded the security of a strong, independent and impartial Second Chamber, possessing that confidence in its own inherent strength which is the condition precedent of stability and security. It is a great mistake to suppose that the absurdly partisan constitution of the House of Lords has been a source of strength to the Unionist Party: it has been a source of weakness. It has, no doubt, enabled the Unionist Party when in opposition to delay, and sometimes even to defeat, purely partisan measures, which lacked the support of a stable majority in the constituencies. This faculty ought to exist in an efficient Second Chamber. It existed in the House of Lords until August 10, 1911, but it only existed when a Liberal Government was in office. A control so lopsided in its exercise was impossible to maintain, and was doomed to succumb when seriously challenged in a popular quarrel. It is essential that Conservatives should clearly realise that it is far less important to maintain a partisan Second Chamber than an efficient Second Chamber. It is, for instance, probably more important, to take a concrete illustration (though both were important), that we should possess a Second Chamber able to resist the Trades Disputes Act than a Second Chamber able to resist Mr Birrell's Education Bill. To put the same proposition in a different way, only a very superficial observer, however strong his Conservative prejudices,

can be satisfied with a Second Chamber which is only able to oppose Liberal measures so long as Liberal measures are obviously unpopular. Many measures highly expedient may be unpopular for the moment just as measures highly inexpedient may be popular for the moment. The desirable Second Chamber must not merely have the power to interpose delay in the Conservative interest, when an opportunity presents itself of striking a blow at the Liberal Government: it must possess the power, whatever the complexion of the Government of the day, of interposing a period of delay and even the obligation of an appeal to the people when new and unconsidered proposals are threatened by either party. If this decision seems harsh to those who in the past have inclined to the view that the Second Chamber must necessarily be Conservative, the answer is, I think, clear and decisive. Rash and ill-considered changes in nine cases out of ten are proposed by our opponents and not by ourselves. Stability and security are and ought to be the principal objects of the Unionist Party. A Second Chamber which insures those primary objects would be cheaply bought at the price of a Second Chamber which occasionally embarrassed a Conservative Government by delaying and, in a rare instance, by defeating Conservative proposals. The three objects which require to be constantly borne in mind in the reconstitution of the Second Chamber are Security, Stability, and Impartiality between the parties. If the conditions involved in these words are provided, nothing else matters. I myself should contemplate the establishment of an elective Second Chamber with grave feelings of apprehension, and I am satisfied that the institution of such a body would shift the whole centre of gravity in our constitution; certainly it would gravely and perhaps

permanently impair the authority of the House of Commons, but I would far rather vote to-morrow for an elective Second Chamber, facing boldly the risk of constitutional deadlock, and the consequent conflicts of jurisdiction, than I would vote for a Second Chamber which had not behind it the moral force strong enough, however much it disapproved it, to reject the Trades Disputes Act.

The relation of the Unionist Party to the Church is even simpler, and it throws its roots at least as deeply into the history and tradition of the party. I am not myself a Churchman, but I realise as profoundly as any member of the Church the importance of associating religion with the State, and I am unaware of any competitive school of religious thought which can at the present time put forward plausible claims to usurp the position of the Church of England. Still less need we argue (for upon this we are all agreed) the importance of protecting the endowments of that Church. The obligation of doing so is as important (neither more so nor less), as that of preserving the endowments of every Nonconformist community. Only bores nowadays dogmatise upon religious subjects, but every sensible person agrees that it is a primary duty of sound statesmanship to encourage every variety of religion which bases itself upon the ethical precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. The dogmas of a particular sect may be right or they may be wrong. All the sects alike are warring against indifference and materialism, and politicians, who are not indifferent to the value of a lofty ethical standard in every department of human life, will welcome the co-operation of every Christian sect, and will therefore welcome also the increased influence which the benefactions of pious persons offer to different Churches in the form of endowments. He

will not trouble to ask whether the endowments are given to Churches or Chapels: he will recognise that they were destined to purposes at once pious and public, and he will dismiss as sacrilegious and impolitic any proposal to divert them to secular purposes.

The next point of unity which will receive general assent in Conservative doctrine is that which insists upon the solidarity of the nation as a whole. No truth is more familiar, and none in contemporary politics more frequently forgotten, than that which insists upon the interdependence of the various classes which go to form our national life. The inculcation for party purposes of class hatred is one of the greatest crimes of which any party or any politician can be capable. It is the Parricide of politics. There always has existed in every human society, and there always will exist, great disparity of fortune, a disparity correspondent in the main, at least in the first or the second generation, with the disparity of human ability and human character. No society, civilised or uncivilised, has ever completely redressed the inequalities produced by differences of capacity and temperament. It is always easy under these circumstances for mischievous and unscrupulous persons to preach the doctrines of discontent. Nor within limits is it altogether undesirable that persons should be discontented. The very quality of ambition presupposes the existence of discontent with things as they are; Conservative policy, however, requires that while every class, and every individual in that class, should be encouraged by every means to improve the conditions of their existence in the community, no class should be encouraged to suppose that that improvement can be permanently effected by rancorous hatred and jealousy of those other classes, whose co-operation and

sustained vigour are the first condition of any general improvement.

There has already been enumerated so large a number of fundamental points upon which there is complete unity of view in all sections of the party, as to justify Conservative views in a citizen who differed from the Conservative party on every other political subject. A man cannot form a party for himself, and he must, therefore, either repudiate the civic obligation altogether or unite himself with, and help to influence the policy of, the party which as an organised instrument is prepared to give effect to those objects of national policy which seem to him to be paramount in importance. Probably no independent person ever agreed with the whole policy of any party, but every thoughtful citizen, however independent, is prepared to sacrifice the less important for the more important.

With these observations I approach the subject, or a number of subjects, on which undoubtedly there is considerable difference of opinion in the Unionist Party. A large and powerful section in its ranks points to the unrest which always follows upon a considerable period of Radical Government, and sees in the general weariness of so much ill-conceived activity the most auspicious promise of Unionist success at the polls. They point to the Conservative reaction which followed the prodigious activities of the most restless Government which even Mr Gladstone ever controlled; and they claim that a harassed and bewildered electorate, which has hardly had time to grasp the outlines of one complex legislative enactment before it finds itself in the throes of another, equally controversial and equally difficult to comprehend, stands in need primarily of repose and will support any party able to guarantee a period of tranquillity. What is wanted, it is said, is more administra-

tion and less legislation, fewer grandiose programmes and fewer Autumn Sessions. It is indeed evident that a large measure of truth underlies these views. The activities of the Liberal Party since 1906 have been feverish, incoherent, and often extremely mischievous in their consequences. Many powerful interests have been harassed and injured. Staleness envelops the whole field of politics, manifesting itself most evidently in the House of Commons itself, but penetrating into the humblest political club in the constituencies. It is, under these circumstances, not surprising that many Conservatives should contemplate with disquiet the prospect that the Conservative Party may undertake ambitious programmes competitive, as they apprehend, with the legislative megalomania of our opponents. The constitution of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons to-day makes it certain that such apprehensions will be felt, and makes it essential that they shall be accorded full and generous consideration in the counsels of the party. The fortunes of Conservatism were partially redeemed at the Budget Election by the splendid loyalty of the county constituencies of the south, and the party in the House of Commons received an invaluable recruitment in the persons of many new members, representative of the traditional connection of the party with the agricultural interest. Such members think, and rightly think, that the victories they have won in the crisis where every victory counted, give them, and the interests which they specially represent, a peculiar claim to consideration when policy is determined. They point to the poverty of the agricultural labourer, to his strange detachment from the quarrels which play so large a part in industrial constituencies, and they insist that his pathetic indigence shall not be further charged with the burdens of ambitious

schemes in the direction of social reform. They put forward a claim both strong and irresistible. It would be a wrong, and an irreparable wrong, to place further burdens upon a class whose economic progress has been slower and more disappointing than that of any other class in the community; but the point of view underlying this contention is different from, and, I think, more reasonable than, the one which the avowed ideal is that the Conservative Party should do nothing, should look for office (whenever it can gain it upon these terms), on a policy of negation and inactivity. Of this view, my friend Sir Frederick Banbury is, I think, at once the most capable and the most sincere advocate in the House of Commons, where his presence and his great common sense supply an invaluable corrective to sloppy and ill-considered proposals, from whichever party they emanate. But it would be folly to ignore the plain and evident fact that a large and, I think, growing section of the party finds itself in acute disagreement with these views in their extreme form. Indeed, to accept them is to tear out from the history of Conservative policy every page which records the statecraft of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Randolph Churchill. This younger school of Conservative thought lays stress upon the undoubted fact that the party will never conquer a majority adequate to its purposes until it re-establishes itself in the confidence of the great industrial centres. It believes that such a conquest is possible and may be proximate, and that it may be combined with the due consideration for those agricultural interests to which we owe so much, and to the demands of which on their merits we are so deeply committed. It is pointed out that we are living in a period of incalculable industrial unrest, to the development of which no prudent person is prepared to

assign limits, and the ultimate consequences of which may easily, if it is neither controlled nor directed, submerge the very landmarks of our civilisation. The growing discontent of the working-classes cannot be dismissed with a few punitive recommendations. Agitators have aided to foment it, but their efforts would have been less successful unless reinforced by a genuine and passionate sense of dissatisfaction. The truth is, and it may as well be boldly faced, that the working-classes are not satisfied with their share of the joint product of capital and labour. Their belief in a future state of existence in which the distribution of happiness will be more equal is vague, precarious, and is certainly not becoming more definite. They are no longer prepared to acquiesce in conditions of existence in this life which they think unfair, on the vague chance that the balance may be redressed hereafter. The disastrous spread of ostentatious luxury on every side has united with the controversial necessities of Mr Lloyd George to focus the feelings of discontent into a dangerous head. Motor cars have manufactured more Socialists than all the eloquence of Mr Keir Hardie and Mr Lansbury; and although in many well-paid trades the attitude of labour is unreasonable and grasping, the wrongs under which many poor persons labour are so cruel and so undeniable that it is astounding that any school of political thought should conceive a policy of inactivity to be possible. I should like to inscribe on the walls of every Conservative club, and particularly of those clubs to which the wealthier members of the party belong, these words from Mr Booth's *Life and Labour of the People*: "The result of all our inquiries makes it reasonably sure that one-third of the population are on or just above the line of poverty or are below it, having at most an income which, one time with another, averages 21*s.* or

22*s.* for a small family (or up to 25*s.* or 26*s.* for one of larger size), and in many cases falling much below this level." Mr Booth shows that in London alone 354,444 men, women, and children live in chronic want on less than 18*s.* per week per family, while 938,293 persons subsist on less than 21*s.* a family.

Mr Rowntree's investigations showed that these incredible conditions existed in an almost exactly similar degree in the city of York. He says: "It was found that families comprising 20,302 persons, equal to 43·4 per cent. of the wage-earning class, and to 27·84 per cent. of the total population, were living in poverty." And Mr Booth's conviction has been recorded: "I have long thought that other cities, if similarly tested, would show a percentage of poverty not differing greatly from that existing in London."

I entertain no doubt that Tariff Reform would considerably alleviate these evils, but I have never believed that it will end them. Which party in the State stands to lose most by their continuance? Is it not evident that the party, to whom stability and content are vital, is far more deeply concerned to restore happier conditions than the party which lives upon discontent and the promulgation of class hatred? A contented proletariat should be one of the first objects of enlightened Conservative policy. Every intelligent autocracy has grasped this elementary political truth. Napoleon, the greatest and most practical social reformer who has ever lived in France, left it on record that he would rather lose soldiers on the battlefield than citizens in industrial disturbance. And it is very necessary to remember that no appeal is possible to those great ideals of patriotism which the Imperial Party must always make, if the persons to whom they are addressed are living lives empty of amenity and void of hope.

What politician is so bold as to dare talk of the Empire to men who cannot nourish their families, at the price gladly rendered of a life of grinding toil, and who know that its certain conclusion, when they have become the wastage of the industrial scrap-heap, is a lonely and dishonourable death in a workhouse?

But I should be told that these conditions, though shocking to every humane person, are unavoidable and are at any rate beyond the reach of legislation, and it may be that insistence will be made upon the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. In the infancy of civilisation there is much to be said for this doctrine. It played a part, for instance, in the pre-English history of India not altogether unsalutary, and it has often solved with simplicity, if not without cruelty, the problems of over-population and excessive poverty; but it may be dismissed with the observation that it has never survived contact, and never will survive contact, with either Christianity or civilisation. To the slightly distinguishable point of view that legislation can do nothing, I offer the reply that legislation when rightly conceived and adequately considered has already done much, and it would be strange, indeed, if we had exhausted its resources. But the further argument remains that legislation is costly, that the nation is already overtaxed, and that further burdens will diminish the productive efficiency of the country, and be a dangerous source of weakness in the event of international complication. The arguments underlying this view are too strong to be lightly waved aside. The national expenditure to-day has reached a total which is disquieting to persons of very different schools of thought, and the wild-cat finance of the Insurance Act has involved the country in an ultimate contingent liability, out of all proportion to any benefits which are likely to follow from the Act. But a con-

demnation of insufficiently considered expenditure does not involve a condemnation of all expenditure, and I would invite those who think they can arrest the progress of social reform by the warning-post of retrenchment, to consider whether they seriously believe that the last word has been said on the contributions of the rich to the necessities of the poor. To take a specific illustration, do they think that our existing slums will be tolerated for long or that they will be removed without public contribution? The question, then, to which constructive Conservative statesmanship should be directed is not whether further reforms will be necessary, but how can these reforms be effected with the least mischief to our public and private finance; and the question which requires scientific treatment in relation to the great staple industries of the country is: What is the point at which taxation so hampers English capital in the field of International competition as to impair production and diminish employment?

No statesman who understands his business will ever push taxation beyond that point; but taxation is unlikely in the future to make a less exacting demand, and it is even more likely that future Chancellors, realising that the owners of agricultural land are among the most deserving and public spirited, as they are certainly in the main among the least wealthy, of our better class population, will look more to the contributions of that luxurious class living entirely for pleasure which was treated with comparative indulgence by the Budget of 1910.

II

STATE TORYISM AND SOCIAL REFORM

Almost the most pressing of our problems to-day is that which is vaguely described as the problem of Social Reform. It grows indeed more pressing as the failure of the Lloyd-Georgian method grows more manifest, and as the time approaches nearer when a Unionist Administration may find itself responsible for the condition of the people. The need for legislation affecting internal conditions of national life will not, as some short-sighted optimists aver, pass with the passing of the Government. The evils of which the recent Labour troubles have been the outward sign are too deep-rooted in our Industrial, Political, and Fiscal system to be excised so easily. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and his friends did not make all the trouble; they simply made the most of what they could find. Limehouse blew the embers of discontent to a flame, but the fire will go on crackling long after the bellows are broken. It is time, then, that the Unionist Party made up its mind what are the precise questions which are likely to confront it in office, and what policy a general application of its principles to these questions will produce.

In the first place, let us clear our minds by asking what exactly the term Social Reform means. It is

clearly a somewhat loose expression, and in many ways Disraeli's phrase, "The Condition of the People," expresses the concept aimed at far better; but this last is too long and too little adapted for constant use in writing or speaking. One may reach one's definition best by a process of exclusion. Social Reform is not a question of Defence, or Foreign Policy; nor is it a Constitutional matter like Home Rule, or Welsh Disestablishment, or the House of Lords, or the Franchise; nor is it a question affecting directly the oversea dominions of the Crown. With the Fiscal question and with the Licensing and Education controversy it is no doubt intimately bound up, but yet not so intimately that all three cannot be (and indeed they often are) discussed from a different standpoint to that of the Social Reformer. What, then, is left for Social Reform in the field of Affairs? and the answer is the residue. That residue of internal affairs which does not fall under any of the foregoing heads may be fairly claimed, I think, by the Social Reformer as his own especial sphere. Within that sphere are found such questions as Food Prices, Wages, Rents, Land Tenure, Housing Accommodation, Health Conditions, Local and Imperial Taxation, Industrial Legislation, Emigration, Technical Education, and Poor Law. Food Prices, Wages, and Emigration form, no doubt, an integral part of the Fiscal and Imperial problem, just as Technical Education and Poor Law Reform are closely bound up with our Educational system regarded apart from the religious controversy. The strands of national life are so closely interwoven that they cannot be separated in actuality, though they can be divided for convenience of discussion. It will always be easy to show that the destruction of the Constitution might have, by carrying Home Rule with it, a marked influence on the social condition of

Ulster, or that to discuss Trade Union Legislation, without taking note of that political fact the parliamentary Labour Party and its Socialist tenets, is an absurdity. All these and similar points may be conceded to the special pleader, but the concession will not blur the broad distinction which does exist, in fact, between external and internal affairs, and between social and economic as opposed to political or religious phenomena. As Social Science is that body of thought which deals directly with the facts of the condition of the people, so Social Reform is legislation which endeavours to improve the conditions of the inhabitants of these islands in health, wealth, happiness, and efficiency. Reformers of all parties would, no doubt, accept this definition, and I shall be asked: How does the Unionist method differ from that of the Benthamite on the one hand, or the Socialist on the other? This is a most pertinent question—so pertinent, indeed, that if it cannot be answered satisfactorily *cadit quæstio* and Toryism is put at once out of court as an instrument of Social Reform. But a further conclusion follows: If there is to be no room in domestic legislation for anyone who is not a Whig or philosophic Liberal of the *laissez-faire* school, or a Radical or Socialist of the new school, Toryism has no standing as a political force at all. For otherwise since domestic questions of this kind are always with us in some form or another, save when overshadowed by some great national crisis, this school of political thought would be condemned to almost perpetual impotence. No party, or at least no party which ever expects to be in office, can have *no* policy in social questions. Only three courses are open to it: it may back the Individualist-Whigs, or it may back the Radical-Socialists—or it may put forward an independent policy of its own. If it followed the first

course, as some of its friends have suggested to it at one time or another, it would certainly have a policy; but that policy would no more be "a Conservative one" than if it pursued the second path and adopted the principles of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr Ramsay Macdonald. It is to my mind an almost ludicrous paradox to suggest to the political heirs of Canning and Disraeli that the economic and political principles of Austin, Bentham, the two Mills, Bright, and Cobden, who captured the Whig Party in the early 'forties, and, using those ideas and that party as an instrument smashed the Conservative cause and the country gentleman to pieces, can be the foundations of Tory policy. The party may, of course, build on those foundations if it likes, but not, surely, in the name either of Conservatism or Toryism! The second course is clearly inadmissible, for if it were adopted it would not result in a Conservative policy of Social Reform, but, on the contrary, in something even more unlike it than Liberal Individualism. There remains, then, the third alternative — the Independent Conservative programme.

But here comes the original question: Is there such a third principle? and, if so, what is it? One very simple answer might be made: there must be or have been, or else Toryism would never have existed, for no party could have retained any semblance of consistency or unity for nearly a hundred years if it had acknowledged, on social questions, no line which readily distinguished it from its opponents, and on which the majority of its adherents were not more or less agreed. But to the justification of my thesis by history and fact I will come back later. The principle has certainly existed, and the next question is one of definition. Once again, let us begin by the process of exclusion.

The advocate of a Tory social programme is in the position of an army which is being fired into both on the front and on the flank. The fiercest assault comes from the Socialists and their Radical allies, who, judging from the experiences of the past, feel fairly confident of defeating the extreme Individualist in a hand-to-hand encounter, but regard with a mixture of anger and alarm the intervention in the dispute of a third party with its own solution of those social difficulties out of the existence of which the Radical-Socialists are making their political living. Nor, when one considers what defeats the Radicalism of certain epochs has suffered at the hands of men like Disraeli, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr Chamberlain, can their violent antagonism be regarded as anything but natural? They perceive the greatest danger to their own prospects, and are prompt to meet it. So much for the frontal assault; the flank one comes from a very different quarter. There exist on both sides, in politics, though I think in diminishing numbers, some individuals to whom the doctrines of the early- and middle- nineteenth-century philosophers are still true, and who think that when the State has supplied an army and a navy, and a police force and a Constitution, it has come to the limits assigned by nature. Of this view the late Auberon Herbert was the most famous and perhaps the most extreme exponent. This theory, which, invented by Liberalism, was in the hey-day of its popularity supported chiefly by Liberals, has, in its decline, found in a modified form more disciples among the Conservative ranks. The Liberal origin of their theory has brought these Conservatives into a sharp conflict of ideas with the modern exponents of the old State Toryism. It accounted for the resistance to the Tariff Reform propaganda which so nearly split the party in

1904, and for the existing reluctance, in certain quarters, to face the danger of existing social evils with any solution other than a policy of blank inaction. This dwindling band of extreme Individualists consists of men of the highest character, for they cling to ideas which are admittedly not popular, and which, to the modern as to the old Tory, are simply not true. If they will admit the first fact, they are sometimes less ready to admit the second. The consequence is that in front the Tory Social Reformer is attacked with the old Radical accusation that all he cares about is the Millionaire, the Duke, and the Landlord, and that he has no intention of carrying his reforms into effect; and, on the flank, with the side-shots of his friend, who explains that he really means business, but is doing it with the intention of outbidding the Chancellor by betraying Conservative principles for votes. Of Radical accusations no one takes much account, but I think we have some right to appeal to our friends with whom we are in cordial co-operation and agreement over three-quarters of the field of politics to give our motives some credit, and to consider that we may, possibly, have some real reason for the faith that is in us. Even if one were insincere, it is a little hard to be accused of two mutually destructive forms of insincerity. These, then, are the twofold critics of State Toryism in social affairs. If we pursue the method of exclusion by seeing where we differ from both, we shall, I think, be close upon the definition of the practical Conservative policy of Social Reform.

The main differences can be put in a sentence. The *laissez-faire* Conservative or Whig wishes the State to touch nothing: the Socialist, and in a lesser degree the Radical-Socialist, wishes the State to touch everything and to touch it in the wrong way. The modern Con-

servative, like the old Tory, wants the State to touch some things but to touch them in the right way. The extreme Individualist argument has been so utterly exploded philosophically, and so completely disregarded by nearly all those who in the last fifty years have had the practical administration of affairs, that it is difficult to treat it with the respect which its venerable antiquity and the substratum of real truth it contains should no doubt command for it. Nor do I wish to suggest that the Conservative-Whig or Whig-Conservative really holds it to be true in the fullest sense. But the trouble about the whole doctrine is that if you do not hold it true in that fullest sense, and in an even fuller one than even its authors did, you cannot hold it true at all. It was, indeed, a queer compound of Rousseau, Bentham, and Darwin — the last named imperfectly digested. The "natural man" of the French Revolution, the philosophic Liberal, and the survivor of the struggle for existence met and embraced. They agreed on a great number of subjects. That the natural man was the perfect one, and that to give his nature free play Established Churches ought to be abolished entirely and Central Governments abolished as far as practicable; that all restrictions on free competition must vanish; that nationality was, on the whole, a superstition; that out of this free state of competition the fittest natural man would survive, and that his survival must conduce to the greatest good of the greatest number because he would be more intelligent and thrifty and hard-working than his rivals, and so would do more work and produce a larger economic output. Finally, that any Government assistance to those who went to the wall in the course of the struggle was keeping alive the unfit at the expense of the fit, and so limiting the productive powers of the fit and discouraging them

from exercising their full powers. It is impossible to-day to believe that such a farrago of nonsense was ever believed in by men of culture and intelligence. It was, of course, always perfectly clear that the state of civilisation which enabled men of character and ability to make more money and to develop industry more quickly than their competitors was due to the fact that the process of civilisation had been carried out in defiance of every one of their fundamental doctrines. Who, after all, is the natural man? and who is the fittest survivor? As Mr Balfour pointed out the other day—and it was, indeed, all that Darwin ever said—the fittest man is the man who survives, and there, as Dr Johnson used to say, is an end of it. What type he is will depend on the circumstances of the age. The natural man who survived in the Stone Age was the man who was best with the flint club, and if Benthamism had been the prevailing and only creed in that day, civilisation would probably have remained in that epoch. Indeed, according to the whole theory, the nineteenth-century garrotter had the greatest grievance against his more wealthy but less-powerful victim, who was using "the authority" of the police to prevent the "natural survivor" taking his life and succeeding to his money. Similarly, a combination of individuals to maintain an army or a navy was utterly opposed to the whole creed of Victorian individualism; for if the Germans or the French were the better people, no objection could logically be raised to their survival in the struggle. The only answer could be that the invader would be unfair enough to rely on that combination of individuals known as a fleet or an army, and would thereby overwhelm the resistance of individuals. And in that answer lies the whole condemnation of the individualistic theory—for it claims that what pays is right,

and must admit that combination may pay better than isolated competition. It is, in fact, as much on this capacity for combination and self-sacrifice for the common end that civilisation has been built, as on the other qualities of energy and self-help which are existent in the human race.

Through the period of the tribal development, through the city state, through the ages of the kingdom and of the Empire, all those factors which, in the organisation of Church and State and in the enforcement of order, have represented the social instincts of a people, have done at least as much for progress as the instinct of self-advancement and the trampling down of weaker brethren. And if this is true in three-quarters of the sphere of Government, is there any prior reason to suppose that it is not true in the other quarter—the sphere of Social Science? The Individualists, indeed, are out of court unless they are ready either to advocate social anarchy and individual club law, or to come down off their theoretic pinnacle, and to admit that the State may be, under proper provocation, as justified in interfering in internal social conditions as in external defensive precautions. With such an admission I would for the moment be content before discussing what the practicable forms of State intervention are, or how far State intervention can benefit the community as a whole. The ground will be cleared by the admission that combination for social purposes may be as necessary to a community for social purposes as it is for military ones.

Let me now turn to the other side of the shield, and consider the doctrines of the principal opponents of Toryism. If their name is legion, their varieties of doctrine are almost as numerous. They may, however, for the purposes of the argument, be divided

into two main groups: the thoroughgoing academic Socialist, and the Radical or Labour man who will grasp or swallow just so much of the whole Socialist doctrine as happens to suit his immediate political purposes. Into one or other of these groups, or into some half-way house between them, nearly every Socialist or Radical-Socialist falls. The purest milk of the word will be found among those Fabians who desire, by a gradual extension of administrative function, to graft the doctrines of the Platonic Republic on the English social system. You begin with gas and water, and end with the perfect State. This view, though productive of several valuable administrative reforms, has the defect of being both impracticable and absurd. The Fabian conception of the future British State has the same relation to reality that a pile of clouds has to a line of cliffs. Like the Republic, it is a vast theoretic dream, but though the dream will never be tested, the theory has already been riddled with the fire of criticism. Plato himself supplies the best comment on it in his final admission that his whole system would collapse through lack of some kind of inherent vitality and driving power. The living forces of mankind would either march through the elaborate paper system, or, if the system were too strong, both alike would atrophy or perish. The Socialist has rushed to one extreme and the Individualist to the other. The first has built his State on an imaginary man, who, like the bee or the ant, possesses nothing but the faculty of organisation; the other on an equally vain imagination—a being possessed of nothing but the instinct for self-advancement and self-preservation. The vice of Individualism is that it would hamstring man's power for co-ordinate advance and joint sacrifice; the vice of Socialism is that it would cut the other motor-muscle of character,

the desire for the struggle, and for the reward the struggle brings. It is impossible to tamper with the principle of private property, and with the principle of the family and hereditary succession which depends on it. Both the extremes are indeed so utterly untenable that criticism of them must partake of the nature of platitude.

Neither of them, indeed, would have secured such a wide and far-reaching vogue but for certain extraneous facts which had nothing to do with the persuasiveness, or, indeed, the truth of the theories themselves. The theories were invented by what Napoleon used to call, contemptuously, "the ideologues": they only became popular when bits of them happened to be of use to practical men. Thus, parts of philosophic Liberalism suited the interests of the rising manufacturing class. These wanted universal Free Trade to maintain their ascendency in the markets of the world: and behold, they were told that tariff barriers were wrong. They wanted cheap labour, and they were informed that factory legislation was uneconomic. They wanted to break the influence of the country party and to cheapen labour by cheapening food, and they were told that protection was invented by the Devil himself. But they did want an army and navy and a police to protect them from the French or the Chartists, so the logical fulfilment of the creed was allowed to drop out of view. Similarly, the theory of Socialism has been the product of the pundits, and only where its destructive side has been of value to certain types of politician has it emerged into prominence. But I must pass over the Radical-Socialist doctrine for the moment, and pass on to the next phase of the argument: the definition of the Tory attitude towards Social Reform.

Enough has been said, I hope, on the negative

instances given to show what Tory principles cannot be. They cannot be based either on philosophic Liberalism or on its antithesis, Socialism. Tory principle must be based in this sphere as it is in others, first, on the unity of the State, which Individualism denies, and second, on the conception of the continuity and stability of the State, which Socialism would destroy. In the third place, Toryism must regard the people of these islands not as if they were "built like the angels with hammer and chisel and pen" to suit a preconceived doctrine, but as they actually are—men animated by those mingled motives of enterprise and self-interest, patriotism and self-sacrifice, daring and prudence, which have inspired citizens and constructed commonwealths from the dawn of history.

The conception of unity is at the bottom of the Tory attitude of mind. It is nothing but the instinct of patriotism, the sense that the nation is a single unit, and not a haphazard collection of conflicting individuals; and that the unit must, at any cost, be strengthened and preserved. Toryism therefore turned, in the civil wars, to the symbol of a dynasty as the embodiment in the crown of the idea of national unity, to the symbol of the Church as embodying the spiritual life of the nation when the Stuarts proved themselves impossible; and the party constantly thereafter found in Church and State its rallying cry and watchword. Similarly, in the defence of the integrity of his Majesty's dominions, whether from external attack or internal disintegration, the key-note of the Tory Party has always been that of union. Whether, then, we are strengthening our military and naval defences, resisting Home Rule, or reaching forward to a greater measure of Imperial consolidation, we are supporting the principle that unity is

strength, and that the State is best profited by the greatest community of interest between the greatest number of its members. It is only necessary to apply this conception to the social problems which face us to find ourselves on firm ground. All we have to ask ourselves, in general, is whether a policy of class hatred and antagonism (and such antagonism and hatred may be engendered by either side) will profit the State, and, in particular, whether any given proposal of Social Reform will or will not redound to the general advantage of the community.

I think I shall obtain from everyone, except from a few admitted partisans, a formal assent to the proposition that class union is better than class hatred. But something more than a formal assent is required to a cardinal doctrine of Tory principle—the spirit of the assent must be carried into practice in the sphere of domestic legislation. I will illustrate my meaning by an instance. When the Unionist Housing Bill was introduced this year into the House of Commons, it was at once assumed, without much preliminary examination, by the meaner type of critic, that *it must be* an attempt to benefit not the occupier, but the owner, not only because it was a Tory measure, but because the two interests were apparently irreconcilable. This type of mind is so steeped in class venom, and in the belief that life and politics can be nothing but a disintegrating struggle between greedy classes in this country, that it does not believe in the possibility of a patriotic housing policy designed to benefit the whole community. That is the class-hatred mind — it is the type of mind one may be forgiven for praying never to possess. But let us look at the reverse of the picture. Suppose anyone had risen up from the Opposition benches (not that anyone

did) to declare that any Housing Bill which succeeded in benefiting the occupier must of necessity damage the landlord, and that for that reason the Unionist Party ought to be opposed to the Bill, would he not have been in *eadem injustitia* with the Radical land-taxer as a begetter of class hatred and as an opponent of the Tory principles of class union and the doctrine of the common national interest? Needless to say, it is precisely for statements of this kind that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his friends look out with the greatest eagerness, for they can be at once quoted as a proof that the Opposition themselves agree to the Radical doctrine that the condition of the working classes can only be improved by the methods of the class vendetta. This view is a thoroughly false one, and its application, in practice, could only lead to the joint ruin of all classes alike. The Radical-Socialist does, in this matter, after his kind, but it ill becomes those who believe in the doctrine of national unity to give currency to the fallacies of their opponents by declaring every Social Reform a blow to property or a form of Socialism without troubling to examine it in detail.

If the spirit in which the Opposition approached the Unionist Housing Bill were applied to the whole field of Social Reform, and it were admitted that there is no hopeless antagonism between class interests which cannot be reconciled under a higher national unity, the fundamental Unionist principle of Social Reform would have been admitted, and we should be free to consider every measure upon its merits.

But what are to be the merits and demerits of Social Reform measures, as viewed from the Unionist standpoint, and in what scale are they to be weighed? I say that they must be weighed in exactly the same balance as we have weighed the issues between Free Trade and

Tariff Reform, and that there is only one test either of a Tariff or a Social measure: "Does it or does it not add to the total productive efficiency and prosperity of the whole people?" If it does so add, it is justified by the national and patriotic doctrines of the party; if it does not so add, it must be whistled down the wind, though it were the most attractive lure for votes that even the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer ever conceived.

And here I must resume my controversy with the older Individualists at the point where I abandoned it for the moment. I had been pointing out, that to say that a society might rightly and profitably be organised for purposes of military defence and police protection, and not for Tariff, industrial and social purposes, was not, on *a priori* grounds, a tenable position unless some special reason could be given for this particular attitude towards internal problems. As a matter of fact, I do not think any such case for a distinction has ever been made, because philosophic Liberalism was essentially cosmopolitan, and did not trouble itself about national interests or national defences—while its practical prophets took the army and the police for granted. We are therefore left, from the Unionist standpoint, with nothing but the problem of deciding whether, as a matter of fact, *laissez-faire* in social matters or an active social policy is of the greatest advantage to the nation.

The first contention of the Individualist school is, of course, that a policy of *laissez-faire* leads to the elimination of the unfit and the growth of a sounder and more vigorous population. One can only ask, does it? An examination of our great industrial centres and of the relative birth-rate of the more successful and the less successful classes would satisfy any medical authority that if present-day Britain is to be the test of the

Spencerian doctrines, something is wrong with the sage's view. Of course it is possible to reply that the unfit have not been allowed to die off, but this very reply forces one to realise the effects of the half-hearted application of the Individualist doctrine in home as in foreign affairs. People have not been compelled to die of starvation, legally, since Tudor times, and by custom and practice were not for ages before those times. Is our policy to be the starvation of the unfit? If not, all that *laissez-faire* leads to is the multiplication of the dregs of society, whose increasing numbers have to be supported by the wage-earning and profit-earning members of the community. In other words, the nation pays for these dregs in its workhouses, its prisons, its infirmaries, its lunatic asylums, its sanatoria, its hospitals, its police courts, its industrial schools, its outdoor relief. It pays too, in extreme reckoning, for its obsolete Poor Law system, its low, casual-labour wages, its sweated industries, its bad housing and sanitary conditions, its deficient educational method, and its general lack of power to provide a coherent arrangement of social regulations. If one added up the total amount of local and Imperial expenditure which goes to the objects and institutions mentioned, and could imagine the nation freed of two-thirds of these burdens by a policy of Social Reform undertaken twenty years ago, I do not think that the exchequer would have shown a deficit on the transaction, while the nation would have shown an incomparable gain in health, efficiency, and political content. Whether this be so or not, one is entitled to ask whether, if this contention be proved true either in the general case or in any particular proposal for social amelioration, any patriotic party could refuse to undertake a course of policy which would in the long run relieve the burden of rates and taxes and

stimulate the productive efficiency of our people? If the answer be in the negative, as I think it must, any particular scheme for Poor Law, Housing, or Health, or Wages Reform, which the Unionist Party may put forward, must stand on its own merits, and be judged by this test. But let us not listen to the plea that all such proposals are, in their essence, Socialistic or Radical. On the contrary, any successful proposal of this kind which can stand the test proposed is the antithesis of Socialism and the destruction of Radicalism. It builds up the race and consolidates the country, while it destroys the social garbage on which the carrion crows of politics feed.

In striking this profit and loss account, it is, of course, impossible to calculate it correctly over a single year. The nation, in expending money on Social Reform, is in the position of a big firm which scraps old machinery and lays down new plant in the expectation that the original capital outlay will be repaid with profit in the ultimate event. A generation may elapse before the full return comes in. Further, it would be folly to spend a penny more on schemes which simply ameliorate the lot of the unfortunate without preventing in any way the recurrence of the same evils on an even greater scale. Any real social policy must be at once diagnostic, prognostic, and curative. It must draw a rigid distinction between the cases which are already hopeless, and in which nothing can be done but to segregate those who will do harm to society, and the cases which are by no means hopeless, and in which individuals can still be rescued from the abyss and set upon their legs again. For instance, the whole defect of our existing Poor Law system is that it fails to make this absolutely essential distinction. It lumps together the just and the unjust, and places in a single category the honest unemployed workman and the hopeless vagrant. The only question

asked is: "Can you support yourself?" There is a further question, which ought to be asked, but is not: "Are you willing and able to support yourself if the opportunity is offered you?" The Poor Law system has been based on the idea that though a man may not starve, the application for relief implies in itself that he belongs to the class of the unfit, and that nothing can alter the fact or redeem the man's character. The whole contention is precisely on all fours with the Free Trade argument that nothing can revive or support an industry which appears to be failing under the stress of competition. Such industries, if a tariff or an influx of capital gives them an opportunity, can frequently retrieve their positions in the most startling manner. Similarly, individuals are not necessarily hopeless simply because they fall upon evil days. A little State capital may well be better invested in training men to new trades or in finding them employment rather than in paying for them, on and off, as more or less permanent paupers and the fathers of paupers to the end of their days.

It is, indeed, in the point of view that the Unionist Party has reached by its study of Tariff Reform problems that the greatest hope for the future of Social Reform is to be found. The theory of dynamic as opposed to static efficiency, on which all the protective systems of the world are based, and based successfully in the realm of practice, may now be applied to internal as well as to external problems, and the lessons learnt from industry may be applied to the men who work them.

I will elaborate the comparison in somewhat greater detail. In the 'seventies, it could have been proved conclusively that the manufacture of most goods sold in Germany could have been undertaken more cheaply in Great Britain than within the German Empire.

According, then, to our Individualist and Free Trade friends, Prince Bismarck ought to have come to the conclusion that German industries were from "natural causes" unfit as compared to their British rivals; that they could never hope to hold their own in the struggle for existence, and that it would be cheaper to buy in the British market. That great statesman, who was never deceived either by the ideologues of Individualism or the ideologues of Socialism, saw very clearly that though this might be the case for the moment it need not be the case in all perpetuity, but that to give way for the moment was to give way for ever. English goods might beat German goods for the given year, but granted a tariff and the encouragement of State-aid, German goods might be beating British in under a quarter of a century. The static comparison was against the German Empire, but the dynamic impulse given to German industry by the tariff of 1878 has carried her right to the front, and the result of the policy has been of enormous profit to the German exchequer.

What is true of the industry is roughly true of the individual. Some industries are hopeless and must be abandoned, and their refuse paid for by the State. Some individuals are hopeless and must become a charge on the nation, and a charge which can offer no return. But in the majority of cases neither industry nor individual is hopeless if both have a fair start and a reasonable stimulus of hope. If, indeed, the static test of fitness were adopted, and any man who on a given day could not discharge his liabilities was relegated to the workhouse, or to private charity as a hopeless case, how many of us would be paying rates and taxes to-day? The truth of the matter is that as much is achieved by judicious assistance at critical moments as

by the pressure of immediate necessity. The fear of absolute poverty may make a man work, but absolute poverty itself destroys all desire for initiative. In a word, the policy of *laissez-faire* in social matters is the policy of burdening the rates and taxes to the highest extent; the policy of *savoir-faire* in social matters is to give the greatest possible mass of citizens the opportunity of showing their initiative powers and contributing to the national exchequer. But such a result will never be achieved by statesmen who think that Social Reform is wrong—any more than it will be achieved by politicians who think that class war is right.

So when the balance of the national accounts has to be struck let all these considerations have their due weight. Let us purge ourselves at once of ancient fallacies, and of the modern perversions of political truth with which the demagogues tickle the mob.

I have endeavoured to outline very briefly the conditions of the first test which must be applied to the policies of Unionist Social Reform. There is no space for a detailed examination of those projects which have been put forward, or will be put forward, by the Committee of which I am chairman to deal with Housing and Poor Law, Local and Imperial Taxation, or Industrial Unrest, Emigration, and Technical Education. I am concerned for the moment with the principles, and not the practice, to which those principles must be applied as tests. If the first test is the advantage of the commonwealth, the second test is the continuity of policy and the stability of the State. Changes in social policy must proceed by degrees in order to avoid those sudden disturbances which have gone far to counterbalance the advantages of even the most beneficent of reforms. The doctrine of Toryism is to work on the basis of

existing institutions—to link the past with the present and the present with the future in an unbroken sequence of development. No Tory Social Reform will prosper, and none, I venture to say, will be proposed, which does not fulfil this condition. It is for this reason, among many others which have been indicated, that Tory Social Reform can never have any common ground with the proposals of the Radical or Socialist Party. The policy of Radicalism is to smash whatever exists, while the theory of Socialism is to tear up by the roots the whole fabric of a secular society. The Tory policy is to conserve what is sound in the past, and to build upon that foundation a better political and social edifice for the future.

But it is time to turn back again for a moment on the track of the previous argument. I left out the discussion of the Radical-Socialist programme, which steals from the genuine Socialists any items of their propaganda which may be immediately useful to Radicalism, until the principles of Unionist social policy had been placed in clear outline before the reader. The reasons for such a postponement of the subject are obvious. The chief ground of accusation against the Unionist social programme has been that it is a feeble and insincere imitation of Mr Lloyd George's methods and principles, and that it possessed no vital quality of its own in the realm of history or of fact. The impartial observer will now be in a position to judge of the validity of these accusations.

What, then, is the main feature of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's policy? An incitement to class hatred. Is that a feature of the policy of Unionist Social Reform? A disregard of the conceptions of national honour and national interest as exemplified in his pro-Boer campaign. Is such a course compatible

with the Tory principles which have been laid down? A sublime assurance in promising the millennium on the basis of a half-thought-out Bill rushed through the House of Commons under the closure and the gag. Is that the bait offered by the serious students of social affairs? Promises to bribe the electorate not for the permanent national good, but out of a mixture of charity to be given to the weak and blackmail to be exacted from the rich. Is that the impression that the Unionist policy outlined could convey to any sane man? Both in method and in principle we differ from Mr Lloyd George by the whole width of the heavens, and if any impartial individual will compare Limehouse or Newcastle with this essay I would be prepared to abide by his verdict.

Nor is one without fortifications from the examples of the past.

The great names in the Tory history of the last hundred years have been associated with the doctrine of national unity, and with its application to the internal condition of the people. Disraeli, in his youth, laid down the principles on which the England of his time ought to have been based, and his comparative failure to convince his contemporaries or to overbear his philosophic opponents left his country the richer by a supreme instance of political genius and the poorer by its slums, its wasted physique, and its industrial unrest and class hatred. If a Providence could have made Disraeli a dictator in the early 'thirties, there would have been no social problem to-day. That great man desired to build up the new industrial State on the principles and practice which had animated the older rural and urban dispensations—on the community of interest between master and man, between capitalist and employee, between guild and guild, between agri-

cultural labourer and town workman. What was best in the feudal conception of the past was to be applied to the new progressive forces of the nineteenth century, and the aristocracy of industry was to follow in the tradition of the aristocracy of feudalism and make itself the guardian, and not the exploiter, of its new retainers. Like the masque in the *Tempest*, the whole vision, or most of it, vanished "with a heavy sound." The "Whig dogs" had the best of it under the inspiration of their Radical supporters. Half the Conservative Party broke away, with Sir Robert Peel, to represent the new powerful manufacturing class: rural England was ruined in order to create the social abominations of the nineteenth-century industrial era. When Disraeli, after a quarter of a century of unceasing Parliamentary labour, brought the real Tory Party back to office once more, the time had passed with the energies of the man. "The altar of Mammon," to adopt his own phrase, had in the interval "burnt with a triple flare"; the new system had been created by the Manchester school, and the Tory democracy had only just begun to raise its head again under the stimulus of the Reform Bill of 1867.

But where Disraeli sowed, Lord Randolph Churchill reaped, though he was, as Lord Rosebery has told us, not overprone to acknowledge his obligation to his more illustrious predecessor. Churchill indeed built, without knowing it, a somewhat airy edifice on the solid foundations which Disraeli had laid down. Disraeli had always believed, rightly enough, that the democracy of England is essentially Tory if you do not go out of your way to force it to be anything else. Fortified by this belief, he assisted its enfranchisement in 1867, and was rewarded by his great victory of 1874. Lord Randolph went down to the urban electorate

which had been given him, and overthrew Gladstonian Liberalism in what was supposed to be its chosen stronghold. His success in the attempt was due to his appeal to interests which were, in their essence, national ones, and in his belief that the working classes would stand by the Crown, the Union, and the Constitution so long as these institutions were not allowed to be made instruments for the assertion or oppression of class interests. He proved, by his success, the practical reality of his views, but he was destined, by a malign fate, to hand on the torch which he had received from a greater predecessor to a greater successor.

Mr Chamberlain came, at the price of the Premiership, into the Unionist fold by one of those crises which bring out the essentials of a man's political convictions. No one could deny that in 1885 he was a democrat, any more than it could be denied in 1912. It was urged in the 'eighties, as, indeed, it was urged in the 'nineties, that he was a Radical in the sense that he was one without particular respect for political convictions which did not satisfy his own intellect. But he was a great Tory democrat. He stood for the working classes in so far as their interests were compatible with the Tory conception of the State, and he stood for the constitution of the State in so far as that constitution was not used as a class weapon but as a method of national advancement. He helped the working classes in order to advance the State. He was a victim neither of the rabies of class hatred, which has infected Mr Lloyd George and his friends, nor of the static view of Conservatism, which maintains that whatever is must be best, and that all attempts to alter it must be banned as forms of Socialism. While he remained in the Unionist Cabinet, that Cabinet retained the confidence of the country. When he left it, that

Cabinet dwindled in prestige, and the party which had supported it became an enfeebled Opposition. But all these three statesmen had one thing in common if they had many points of practical difference. Disraeli indeed shone in intellect; Lord Randolph in democratic oratory; Mr Chamberlain in hard common sense joined to parliamentary powers hardly inferior to Disraeli's, and democratic power as great as Randolph Churchill's. But they all believed in the nation, and in the people as the nation—nor could they conceive of Toryism as a form of class interest, but only as an embodiment of that national unity which binds class to class, or kingdom to kingdom; which makes unity out of difference, and an Imperial whole out of bodies separated by the width of the world. One may follow, however humbly, in their footsteps, and say that a policy of union or of empire which leaves Social Reform and class unity out of account is built upon sand, and not upon the solid rock of political reality.

I have said that the essence of Tory Social Reform is the study of the real aptitudes of the people. It is, precisely, here that Individualism and Socialism fail alike. Humanity is composed neither of men struggling to arrive at all costs nor of men ready to sacrifice anything and everything to a common end. Nor, to put the matter in a more concrete form, does the race consist entirely of individuals ready to gamble their chances on the wheel of fortune, and to risk all in order to better their conditions and position. On the contrary, most individuals tread in the accustomed paths, and demand of life that it shall give them security and prosperity in the state in which it has pleased God to call them. A member of a great business firm once told me that in the first flush of his youth he devised a scheme by which his office-boy could rise to the control

of the greatest of his departments. The scheme was not, on the whole, a success. He found that, with certain exceptions in individual cases, what the worker really wanted was a good living wage and a pension in old age rather than the possibility of a dazzling career for which he was generally unsuited. The two views of life are not incompatible from the political standpoint. It is possible to devise a scheme by which nine men out of ten can get the security they want and the tenth man the opportunity he desires. But this can certainly not be attained by the doctrinaires of the Individualist or Socialist creeds. It can only be attained by a party which is ready to deal with facts as it finds them, and to construct its social programme not on the air of wordy doctrine, but on the facts of life as they are. Security of tenure in all classes of life where such tenure is not a national evil: that is the doctrine of Toryism. Opportunity for talent to develop its own potentialities and the resources of the nation where such a development is to the advantage of the State: that is the doctrine of Toryism. Security to those who need it, opportunity to those who desire it, on what better foundation can the state of the future be built? "*Sanitas sanitatum — omnia sanitas*," said Disraeli, in his hackneyed epigram — and we can best carry out the spirit of his words by looking at the needs of the people as they really are, and not as they are conceived to be by the ideologues of either extreme school of thought. We have to deal with men, not with ideas; with the urgent necessities of the democracy of to-day, not with the theories of the past or bubble hopes of the future. In all things we stand midway between conflicting extremes. We are not for the classes or the masses, for their interests are one. We are not for Individualism or Socialism, for neither

is founded on fact. We stand for the State and for the unity which, whether in the form of kingdom or empire or class solidarity, the State alone can bring. Above all stands the State, and in that phrase lies the essence of Toryism. Our ancestors left it to us, and not the least potent method of preserving it is to link the conception of State Toryism with the practice of Social Reform.

III

NATIONAL SERVICE

The question of universal service must in the course of the next decade occupy a far more prominent position in practical politics than belongs to it at the present moment. Just as the Fair Trade agitation of 1884 and the wave of Imperialism which synchronised with Mr Chamberlain's tenure of the Colonial office foreshadowed the great Fiscal controversy of to-day, so events have long been in train which must make defence a primary political issue. And with the question of defence as a whole the issue of National Service is bound up inevitably. It is impossible to consider the function or composition of any part of his Majesty's forces without deciding whether the basis of Home Defence is to be voluntary enlistment or universal service. The country then will be wise to think the question over calmly in times of comparative quiet, and to make up its mind before sudden external pressure or the forcing of the political issue removes it from the sphere of contemplation into that of urgency and passion.

The arguments for and against compulsory service are of a far too complex and vital nature to allow of a decision being reached in an offhand and haphazard manner. There is, however, one set of arguments and one set of persons which must be put aside from

discussion, if that discussion is to have any value. That curious school of thought, far more dominant at all times in British politics than it is the custom to allow, which believes that the social, economic, and military weakness of Great Britain is proportionate to the advance of the cause of righteousness upon earth, is clearly beyond the reach of this particular argument. For if you prove to them that the compulsory system is in favour of national greatness, they will be against you on that count; while if you contend that the voluntary method is the real source of national strength, the extent of their conviction will indicate the volume of their resistance. The pure pacificist is then out of court: one must plead to that great majority of the nation, which however much it may be misled on occasion, really believes that it is the duty of race to protect the heritage bequeathed to it by the past and to hand it down intact to the generations who will come after.

I have said that the question of defence is likely to become increasingly urgent. Does any one who has studied the more recent developments of foreign affairs believe that the time is ripe for abandoning the policy of armed preparation in exchange for the idea of a limitation of armaments? From the early 'nineties to 1912, from the Chino-Japanese War to the struggle between Italy and Turkey, the long list of wars goes on with hardly a break, and far beyond the number of the actual collisions extends the list of conflicts, like the Franco-German struggle over Morocco, avoided because the armaments of either side were too strong and too efficient to give a certainty of victory to either, or of diplomatic triumphs won and war averted only because one side or another possessed too great a preponderance in armament to make resistance by the weaker nation worth the while.

By a curious but not irrelevant stroke of irony the

shriller become the cries of the pacificists the louder grows the roll of the war drums. Peace, in a word, consists in being strong. Weaken your defences sufficiently and you will have war or humiliation upon you in a stride. The business, then, of a nation is to be strong enough to repel all comers with loss: the very existence of that strength is a sufficient guarantee that it will not have to be exercised.

The nation then will have to consider whether our existing system is adequate to the needs of the Empire, and if not, whether a system of universal service for Home Defence would remedy existing defects. To state the problem in this way is to state it in a purely military form: it is to clear out of the way for a moment all those other social, economic, and political questions which are bound up with the conception of a change from the voluntary to the compulsory principle. One must think about the shell before one thinks about the kernel. If no change is necessary from the military point of view, no change is likely to be effected for other reasons: if the change is necessitated by military causes, the other issues must be treated as subsidiary advantages or disadvantages. In a word, men will train themselves in arms to defend their country by arms: they will not so train themselves to improve their physique or to increase the industrial efficiency of the nation.

The military problem, therefore, stands first, nor fortunately is there any need of a prolonged discussion of the general needs of the Empire. His Majesty's Ministers have themselves accepted in action certain broad principles which can be made to limit the area of discussion. What is desired is as follows, though how far that desire has been fulfilled is a matter of acute controversy. (1) A Navy strong enough to protect these shores from anything but an accidental invasion. (2) A

second line of military defence strong enough to defeat any invading force which might slip through our naval defences. (3) An expeditionary force which could be despatched on the outbreak of war to any part of the Empire or of Europe where a British Army was urgently needed. (4) A Navy sufficient to secure the landing and safeguard the communications of any such expeditionary force, whether its objective be the Indian Empire, the mouths of the Scheldt, the Canadian or South African frontier. The functions of the Navy and the Army alike thus dovetail into a dual conception of strategy.

Firstly, the expeditionary force must sail unless a vital strategical position is to be lost, and the Navy must see that it can go. Secondly, the Navy must try and protect our shores, but in case of accident our shores must protect themselves against any invading force which can be landed during a temporary loss of command of the sea at a specific point and for a specific period. That this is the general conception underlying the arrangements of the Government and their expert advisers will not as a matter of fact be denied. To deny it would indeed be to make the whole of their military arrangements unjustifiable and ridiculous. If the regular Army and the whole Navy are to be tethered to our shores we abandon the Empire and our position in Europe at a stroke. If the Regular Army is to be so tethered, why the expeditionary force? If the whole Navy is to be concentrated and can be concentrated successfully and without accident on the defence of these shores against invasion, why create a Territorial Army which would never have anyone to fight? Finally, if the country is not likely to be denuded of its regular forces by an expedition, why is it necessary to attempt to raise 312,000 Territorials to

supplement the resistance of the British regular to an invading army which cannot, according to official calculations, be estimated at more than 70,000 men? There can be no answer to these questions except the admission that there exists no scheme of Imperial defence at all in the minds of his Majesty's advisers—an assertion I have no intention of making. It is not necessary then to call further official witnesses—though such could easily be summoned. One may assume that the general conception of Imperial strategy is of the kind that has been outlined.

For the purpose of the present argument it is not necessary to inquire whether this general idea is right. To do so would be to stray into broad and fallible topics of Imperial and foreign policy. The point is that if this conception is a right one it cannot be adequately carried out under a voluntary system of Home Defence.

If the official scheme is accepted one must assume, I imagine, certain vital facts. In the first place, as in the South African War on the evidence of the Report of the Royal Commission, a struggle with any great foreign Power would *a fortiori* mean an utter denudation of this country of all the regular forces—and possibly an urgent demand for drafts from the auxiliary forces to keep the expeditionary forces up to war strength and to make good wastage.

Clearly, then, it is useless in the light of our South African experiences, or indeed, in the light of reason, to imagine that there will remain in this country long after a declaration of war any large organised body of regular troops trained to act together in the field. What Regulars were left would be nothing but small units which, owing to insufficient training or for other reasons, could not be placed immediately in the firing-line with those larger units of which they were a part. Such

small forces scattered about the various depôts in the country without a joint organisation or any habit of acting together do not constitute a military force at all. They are left behind in the first instance because their physique and their training would not allow them to take the field on the spot, and their value for Home Defence would be practically nil. In any case, if it became necessary to use them for Home Defence, the mere fact of so using them would spell the cutting off the supply of reinforcements to the Army in the field. Your expeditionary force would be bled to death, while no sufficient energy could be infused into it. The same argument applies in a lesser degree to the case of the Special Reserve. Anyone who can remember the state of our Home Defence force from the latter part of 1900 till the close of the campaign, will be satisfied that a modern war of the slightest magnitude would exhaust the whole energies and more than the whole energies of the Regular forces of the Crown. One is thus left with the Territorial Army as the only large force admittedly organised for the purposes of Home Defence. Indeed, if there were any other intention in the minds of Ministers, there could hardly be such intense anxiety on their part about the shortage of men in that Army, or for the improvement of their training conditions.

For if it be contemplated in our general scheme of Imperial strategy to leave a large body of organised Regulars in these islands, and if, as the authorities tell us, the official outside figure for a possible invading army is 70,000 men, the Territorial Army would be almost a superfluity. Fifty thousand Regulars fighting in their own country would not require a great deal of additional assistance in dealing with invaders. We are, therefore, driven back on the conclusion that the official conception of to-day is that the whole burden of Home Defence

would in certain contingencies rest on our auxiliary forces. This is in its essence a very serious proposition. For, however long it might take in practice to get the expeditionary force away, it is clear that that force would be of very little service if it were not entirely clear of this country in the course of a very few weeks. In other words, a situation on the Indian frontier, or in the Far East, or on the mouth of the Scheldt, could not possibly be one which would allow of the leisurely transportation of our forces. It might be said of all those places what the American said of a gun: If they want an army at all, they will want one mighty bad. But this fact brings us to the weakest point in the whole of the official point of view: the Territorial forces are to be embodied at the moment that war breaks out, and they are then to undergo a period of six months' training. What they are to do at the end of the six months, or what real military value could be placed on the service of troops who have not yet completed a training, which is apparently considered essential to their efficiency, is difficult to understand. The country is at any rate to be left for a period which is bound to run into months, deprived of its regular defenders, and dependent on a force which, on the hypothesis of Ministers themselves, is only partially trained. No one with any sense of responsibility could contemplate the prospect of such a state of affairs without the very deepest anxiety.

Nor is it any use for the official apologists to harp any more on the string so often tuned up in the past by the extreme blue water school. That particular view of national existence has passed into the limbo of abandoned theories, and there are very few now so poor in their knowledge of modern military and naval problems as to do it reverence. Among those Ministers certainly could not number themselves. On their own

showing, the Territorial Army is there to meet an invasion, and if there were no possibility of invasion there could be no reason for the existence of that army. The Territorials, indeed, would then be simply playing at soldiers with the secure knowledge that they would never be called upon to take the field.

The impossibility of an invasion having thus been abandoned, the Government fall back on the excuse "that it would be such a little one." Indeed, with a really miraculous foresight they can fix the limits of the invading numbers down to a single rifle. We may be invaded, but the invaders are not to be allowed to bring more than 70,000 men! How such a view can be propounded seriously by any responsible authority passes the wit of man to conceive. While we do not know who the invader is to be, whether he is to be a single Power, or the forces of a coalition, from what port he is to sail, or what the shipping strength of that port may be at the date of the outbreak of war, what the naval resources of the enemy will be, or what the resources and disposition of our own fleet—while all these facts on which alone the numbers can be estimated, remain in a mist of utter uncertainty, we can be told the number of rifles which the invading force is to carry! It is difficult to have patience with a proposition which would be ludicrous if it were not monstrous. Is the Government really prepared to stake the safety of these islands on a theory as nebulous as has ever been conceived? As a matter of fact, this official number is not accepted by such authorities as the *Times* military correspondent, who is now so much in favour with the Liberal Party. The military correspondent of the *Times* places our potential invaders as high as 150,000. This is more than double the official figure.

When the doctors differ it is open to the layman to make his choice. But the main conclusion that the layman will reach here is that none of the doctors has given any conclusive proof that his diagnosis of the risk is the correct one. We cannot be content to stake our safety on the chance that the lesser estimate may be the correct one: we must have a far more adequate margin of security against a possible miscalculation in a case where the factors are wholly uncertain and largely unknown.

But let us assume for the moment that the estimate of 70,000 invaders is correct. The official argument put forward in the House of Commons last summer during the debates on the Army Estimates was that such an invading force would be promptly and easily overwhelmed by a Territorial Army of 280,000 odd men. But the blow would be sudden, the Territorials have garrison and defence work to do, and they must possess an extraordinarily competent organisation for concentration and transport, if they are not to be mopped up in detail before they can be used in mass. But granting, for the sake of argument, the limited number of the invading army, and efficient mobilisation arrangements for concentrating the Territorials at the decisive point, how far would such a voluntary army be capable of meeting a lesser number, say, of the flower of the German Army? The question is easier to ask than to answer. Nor is it much use talking about the Army of the Loire or the Boers. One might just as well discuss the conduct of the Portuguese and Spanish levies in the Peninsular War. The military conditions and the relative efficiency of the conflicting forces differ so much from each other and from the conditions of the problem the nation is considering here and to-day, that historical evidence is practically inad-

missible. And on the merits of the problem itself what final verdict can there be? The buoyant optimism of Colonel Seely and his military inspectors is met by the persistent pessimism of such authorities as Lord Roberts. The relation between training and numbers must in any given case remain an almost insoluble riddle. All that can be said is that any Government which is content to base our safety on the view that it has read the riddle correctly, is taking on itself a very heavy responsibility.

But where many things are doubtful one thing is clear. To pin your faith on being able in the long run to overwhelm a smaller highly trained force by a larger and partially trained army is the most wasteful of all military expedients. It is wasteful of life and it is wasteful of security—as Mr Mark Sykes said in the debate on Army Estimates: "I cannot think of any general or of any strategist since Thermopylæ who has relied upon crushing a smaller and an effective force with masses of inferior material."[1] It means that even in the event of success you will have a terrible butcher's bill to pay, for you are staking on one side more lives to counteract greater efficiency on the other. Further, since the struggle must be a prolonged one, you inflict by its prolongation untold misery on the invaded country, and every day that the invasion lasts the difficulty of sustaining the social and economic fabric on which the final victory over the whole field of operations depends will become greater.

It appears to me, then, to be clear beyond cavil that while it may be impossible to estimate with any accuracy what the numbers of an invading force might be, and therefore impossible to come to a definite conclusion as to whether the Territorial Army could or

[1] *Official Debates*, March 4, 1912, col. 144.

could not deal with it effectively, it none the less remains true that the method is wasteful, and that the Government are depending on a very narrow margin of security. They are, in a word, depending on things turning out as they hope, not on their turning out as they quite possibly might, and the responsibility, as I have said before, is a heavy one. So heavy indeed is it that it seems incredible that any responsible Cabinet would not do everything it could to stimulate any movement of popular opinion in the country which tended to give a larger and more effective Home Defence Force. Ministries, after all, cannot move too far in front of popular opinion. It might be impossible for the present Government to introduce a Bill for national service. But it is one thing to decline to introduce such a measure; it is a totally different thing persistently to disparage the efforts of those who are trying to persuade the electorate to agree to a step which would indisputably buttress up a very weak spot in our military arrangements. One imagines that the difference between the attitude of the Liberal and Unionist Parties—or for that matter of Liberal and Unionist Governments—would be precisely this: that while Liberals and Liberal Ministries, out of terror of the more extreme "peace at any price" people on their own side who prefer the country to run an unnecessary military danger, pour cold water on the National Service movement, Unionists will endeavour to encourage that movement in every way. If the people are not ripe for national service no Ministry could force it on them unless the national urgency was so great that all ordinary considerations of Parliamentary Government and Party politics had to be swept away in the national interests. But what Unionists would do is this. They would give the movement every

assistance, and, following the Australian precedent, they would endeavour to familiarise people with the ideas and the facts of military training by extending that training upwards from the schools.

I have assumed in the last paragraph that some kind of National Service Army is the force needed to mask the weak point in our present defective arrangements. It is, indeed, difficult to see what other kind of force could meet the precise need. We do not want to incur the expense of adding one hundred thousand men to our existing forces in order that they may permanently be tethered to these shores. Nor, indeed, if that were a possible solution, would it be a final one, because if things were going badly with our expeditionary forces, the temptation to throw this army into the scale and to risk fleet protection keeping the enemy out would become irresistible and overwhelming. The old system of the Militia ballot is clearly a very cumbrous, unjust, and uneconomic method of dealing with the problem. It appears to me that the general proposals of the National Service League, which are based roughly on the systems already in existence in Switzerland and Norway, at the present moment hold the field.

What, then, are the proposals of the advocates of National Service? Briefly, they come to this, that all able-bodied youths between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years should be liable for four months' continuous training for one year, and for the three years following to a fortnight's training in camp. After that period they would pass into a reserve to be called up, on occasions of national necessity, up till the age of thirty. This proposal gives us an effective force of 150,000 recruits undergoing training every year, and 405,000 of first, second, and third year men, while the reserve, more or less equivalent, *cæteris paribus*,

to the foreign landwehr would consist of some 600,000 or 700,000 men. We could be sure, in other words, that, apart from recruits, there would be over 400,000 men with training at least as efficient as that of the present Special Reserve. This gives us an increase of something slightly under 100,000 men on the supposed establishment of the Territorials, and from some 120,000 to 125,000 increase on the actual establishment of the Territorial force. But, above all, the men would have received a training vastly better than that which can be given under the existing arrangements. I do not propose to discuss whether such a Home Defence force, with the garrison and local defence work which would fall upon it, would or would not be adequate to deal with any situation which was likely to arise. All one can say is that it would be infinitely more adequate for purposes of Home Defence than the Territorial Army can ever be. The carrying into effect of such a proposal would, in other words, infinitely diminish the margin of risk and infinitely increase the margin of security. Nor, if such a system took root in the national life, would there be any difficulty in extending the period of fortnightly training to meet the necessities of the situation.

The first difficulty which has to be dealt with is the question of cost. There have been a variety of estimates made of the expense of such a scheme. In November 1908, both Lord Crewe and Lord Haldane in the House of Lords gave an estimate of the additional cost as £20,000,000 a year. It was obvious to everyone at that time that such a figure was a ridiculous overstatement, and within nine months the War Office published a memorandum — July 8, 1909 — reducing the extra charge to £7,820,000. It is rather difficult to take seriously any Department which can deduce from the same premises two such startlingly

divergent figures within such a short space of time. The National Service League estimates, of which several have been made, all place the total cost at just under £4,000,000 a year. At the same time, the annual expense on 270,000 or 280,000 Territorials might be taken roughly to approximate to about five millions. On looking at these three sets of figures, namely, the War Office estimate of 1909, the cost of the Territorial Army, and the estimate of the National Service League as to the cost of their own proposals, it is perfectly clear that there is not a sufficient divergence in the figures to make the question of expenditure a paramount issue. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that the lowest estimate is out by £2,000,000, and the highest estimate is out by rather less, one gets the result that the provision of an army with some real claim to training might cost a million more than an army trained under the existing system.

It is impossible, indeed, to lay too much stress on the importance of proposals for four months' consecutive and initial training. Anyone who has had any experience as a Volunteer or Territorial Officer knows perfectly well the difference between the work done in the second week of a camp from the work done in the first week. The ratio of improvement might be placed at something like three to one. It is, in fact, only by a long course of preliminary training that a soldier can really be made. Once he has found his feet, and acquired the habits and aptitudes of military discipline, a comparatively short period of annual training will brush up his knowledge and keep him in a quite fair state of efficiency. When he rejoins the ranks, so to speak, on mobilisation, he will in a week or two be as good a man as the day on which he finished his original training. It is on this fundamental truth, after all, that

the German Armies which finally overthrew Napoleon, and the German Armies which triumphed at Königgratz and Sedan, were built up. One might give a man ten years' training of one month a year and produce nothing like the effect which could be produced by a far shorter total period of initial work and of temporary renewals. This fact has really been recognised from the beginning by the military authorities, when they insisted on Volunteer officers doing a month's training in barracks. It would be impossible to officer any voluntary force even as well—or as badly—as it is officered to-day, if the commissioned ranks were expected to pick up their whole experience in weekly drills or in a fortnight's camp.

The second great objection which has been brought against any such scheme—an objection which, if it were true, would be a most serious one—is that it would interfere with, burden, and dislocate industry. The figures obtainable from Norway and Sweden do not give much support to those who attack compulsory training on industrial grounds. The average number of men who were taken away from their industrial employment in Switzerland during their recruits' training is well under 3 per cent. In many cases it is nearer 1 per cent., and the number removed during the subsequent fortnightly training would, of course, be considerably less. Nor is it necessary that the whole trainings should take place at precisely the same time of year. In this way, there would be no great difficulty in fitting in training periods so as to reduce the number of men absent under arms to a percentage so small as to be practically unfelt. It seems, on the face of it, rather ridiculous to suppose that industries could not adapt themselves to so small a change when a country like Germany does not find its industrial life seriously

affected by vastly longer terms of service with the colours.

Most of the objections that have been stated appear on the surface so trivial when the magnitude of the issue at stake is considered, that one is slightly suspicious of their sincerity. Trivial difficulties are generally advanced by people who object to a particular course from very strong feelings which they are not quite ready to avow. The real objection to national service will, I believe, be found in a kind of prejudice or sentiment or conviction, by whatever term one may care to describe it, which holds that the duty of defending one's country is an unwarranted burden. Here again we come to one of the by-products of the Manchester school epoch of thought and politics. While it is perfectly true, as Colonel Hickson has pointed out in an excellent monograph, that from the earliest days of English history the idea of the National Militia has been a practically permanent one in the mind of Englishmen, and in the structure of society, all that remains of that principle now is the power to apply the Militia ballot. The truth is that a profound gulf separates the England of to-day from the England of 1815; that at the very moment the exhaustion of the Continent made the possibility of invasion remote for nearly fifty years, a new industrial and social system was being built upon a foundation of thought frankly selfish and unpatriotic in its very essence. The old national Army was based to a great extent on the country districts. The new aristocracy of industry cared little about national interests and less about national duties, and while the manufacturer rejected such doctrines, it was rather hard to expect that his employees would embrace them in his despite. In consequence the philosophy of politics on which the old military idea was

founded vanished apparently, and maybe for ever, from among the new democracy of our great towns. It is not perhaps that the new democracy is any more unpatriotic than the old. It is that this particular form of national service is to them a rather startling phenomenon. It is a new idea, and of new ideas, like most other people, they are naturally suspicious. Yet at the same time, their whole-hearted assent to any scheme of universal service must be secured if that scheme is ever to be created, and certainly if it is ever to endure. It would be futile to deny that a vast amount of work of a purely propagandist character remains to be done in the great towns before the problem will be ripe for its material solution. It is on this particular class that the whole energy of the propaganda should be concentrated.

The gradual pressure of the world forces round us, the lead which has been given us by the oversea Dominions, are, however, slowly but surely having their inevitable effect, and we may, I think, look forward to a time in the not far distant future when a political party may, with more or less general assent, find itself in a position to cement with a system of national training a very bad fissure in the dyke of Imperial defence.

IV

LORD ROBERTS AND GERMANY

On 22nd October Lord Roberts delivered a memorable address to the citizens of Manchester. The subject of his observations was so vital, his treatment of them so arresting, and the torrent of criticism by which he has been since assailed so virulent, that it is worth while to attempt a short examination of his position and of the views put forward by his critics. It is hardly necessary to insist that Lord Roberts speaks upon military problems with a degree of authority which can be claimed on behalf of no living soldier. So long ago as 1851 he became a Second Lieutenant in the Bengal Artillery: he served throughout the Indian Mutiny, he commanded the Kuram Field Force in 1878, the Cabul Field Force in 1879, and the Cabul-Kandahar Field Force in 1880. The autumn of 1880 saw him in control of the operations in Southern Afghanistan, in 1885 he had become Commander-in-Chief in Madras, eight years later he was Commander-in-Chief in India, and after an interval of two years he became Commander of the Forces in Ireland. He has taken part in more than thirty engagements, large and small, was mentioned in the course of his career some thirty times in despatches, and in 1902 received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for his incomparable

services to the Empire during the South African war. It is not pretended that any soldier, however distinguished, who puts forward his view of the requirements of national defence should be protected from reasonable criticism, but the claim is put forward that a soldier with such a record should be listened to with respect by his fellow-countrymen, and that he should not be exposed to malignant misrepresentation at the hands of those to whom his opinions happen to be embarrassing or inconvenient. The height of insolence is surely reached when Under-Secretaries, who have never done anything for the country, and are never likely to, attempt to advertise themselves by attacks upon him, which are founded upon gross perversions of his actual words. Nor have these attacks been made only by insignificant people. The contemptuous complacency of Lord Haldane's references to Lord Roberts at the Eighty Club on 29th November has been justly and generally ridiculed. Lord Haldane then said, what everyone of course knows, that in the preparations of strategic plans all the great departments, "the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the Treasury, the Board of Trade, and the Post Office," must take some part. Then he went on: "Lord Roberts is one of the most distinguished leaders of troops in the field whom we possess. But it is one thing to lead troops in the field and another to be a strategist. Until a man is a strategist he cannot fashion plans and organisations for the defence of the country. What I miss in the Lord Roberts of to-day is just that understanding of the point of view of the seaman and of the statesman which is absolutely vital if we are to make a proper military organisation. The fundamental principle is the command of the sea." So we come to this, that to have led victorious armies, organised great campaigns, and been Commander-in-

Chief of India gives a man less authority on the subject of military strategy than to have sat at the Board of Trade or the Post Office. I cannot do better than quote what Lord Rosebery said about these attacks on Lord Roberts. "I believe," he said, "that history when it comes to sum up this time will regard it as one of the astonishing facts in our record and generation that we should turn a heedless and inattentive ear to the warnings, full of weight and full of experience, of the greatest soldier we are privileged to possess." Nor is it only that Lord Haldane is contemptuous of Lord Roberts' authority; he misunderstands and misrepresents his arguments. So far are Lord Roberts and the National Service League from forgetting that "the fundamental principle of our strategy is command of the sea," that they make it the corner-stone of their policy. It is more than that, it is the whole object of their policy. They desire national service not because they ignore the fleet, but precisely because they desire the fleet to be supreme. In his reply to Lord Haldane's speech, Lord Roberts pointed out that "command of the sea," as Lord Haldane used it, is a misleading phrase. The fundamental principle of our strategy is "command of the seas." That command Lord Haldane and his fellow strategists of the departments, by concentrating the fleet in home waters, have already lost for us. They have narrowed the principle to command of the North Sea and the English Channel and the coasts of Great Britain. Until we have an army sufficiently strong to make an invasion of our shores impossible, the fleet will not be free to regain our command of the seas. That is the policy of Lord Roberts and his understanding of the fundamental principle of our strategy.

It is necessary, in view of the misapprehension which

exists, to ask what exactly Lord Roberts said on the subject of Germany and how far his observations render him liable to the censure, or are deserving of the gratitude, of his fellow-countrymen. The following passage from his address contains all that is material in the present connection:

> "Gentlemen, I am, I trust, doing no wrong to the memory of these statesmen, Cobden and Bright, when I point out that in the very years—nay, in the very months—that they were cherishing these illusions of peace and universal disarmament—in those very months the mightiest and most disciplined force that this earth has ever contained was silently being drilled in that wide region from the Rhine to the Elbe and the Oder, and from the North Sea to the Bavarian frontier, until, the right hour having struck, that army disclosed itself, in all its prodigious and crushing mass, and in all its unmatched capacity for destruction and war. And amid those auspicious dreams of peace, for what was that army being trained? Königgratz, Metz, St Privat, and Sedan are the answer. Nor did that army pause until, upon the ruins of the empire of the third Napoleon —upon the ruins, I may say, of France, unprepared in peace and in war, scattered and dismayed—it had reared a new empire, the empire of William I., of Frederick I., and of William II., for whose personal character, noble and imaginative patriotism, and capacities as a ruler I yield to no man in my admiration. Such, gentlemen, was history's ironic comment upon John Bright's and Richard Cobden's eloquently urged policy. No words of mine can increase the crushing weight of Destiny's criticism.

"Now, gentlemen, at the present day, now in the year 1912, just as in 1866 and just as in 1870, war will take place the instant the German forces by land and sea are, by their superiority at every point, as certain of victory as anything in human calculation can be made certain. 'Germany strikes when Germany's hour has struck.' That is the time-honoured policy of her Foreign Office. That was the policy relentlessly pursued by Bismarck and Moltke in 1866 and 1870; it has been her policy decade by decade since that date; it is her policy at the present hour. And it is an excellent policy. It is, or should be, the policy of every nation prepared to play a great part in history. In the case of Germany, consider one of the results. Under that policy Germany has, within the last ten years, sprung, as at a bound, from one of the weakest of Naval Powers to the greatest Naval Power, save one, upon this globe. But yesterday, so to speak, the British Fleets did not feel the furrow of a German war-keel on the wide seas. To-day, every British warship, and every British merchant vessel, thrills in all her iron nerves to that mighty presence. Just as in 1866, by the massing of her armies towards this frontier, or towards that frontier, Prussia controlled the action of Austria; so Germany constrains the action of Great Britain at the present day. Do you wish for proofs? I point to the gradual displacement of the British Fleets before the German menace. I point to the Mediterranean, bereft of British battleships, and to the gradual narrowing, year by year, of our once far-flung battle line. The fact is, we have lost command of every sea but one—the North Sea—and our supremacy over that sea is

now a matter of dispute. In other words, whereas your forefathers traded as of right on every sea, you now only trade by the sufferance of other Powers.

"We may stand still. Germany always advances, and the direction of her advance, the line along which she is moving, is now most manifest. It is towards that consummation which I have described—a complete supremacy by land and sea. She has built a mighty fleet; but, as if nothing were done so long as anything stands between her and her goal, still she presses on—here establishing a new Heligoland—for every available island in the North Sea has now been strongly fortified—there encircling Holland in a network of new canals, and deepening old river beds for the swifter transport of the munitions of war, whether to her Army or her Navy.

"Contrasted with our own apathy or puerile and spasmodic efforts, how impressive is this magnificent and unresting energy! It has the mark of true greatness; it extorts admiration even from those against whom it is directed."

Such is the passage which has principally excited the indignation of men who are never happy except when they are blinding themselves to the real facts of life. Is there a single statement of fact in this masterly historical summary which is marked by inexactitude? It is notorious that there is none. But it is then complained that such a treatment of the subject is irritating and provocative to Germany. The observation if true would be irrelevant, but is it true? Is there anything in this part of the speech which Germans can properly resent? I affirm, on the contrary, that there is not one

statement of which an intelligent and patriotic German would not admit the truth with pride and satisfaction. And observe the tribute which Lord Roberts pays to this virile and resolute nation: "Contrasted with our own apathy or puerile and spasmodic efforts, how impressive is this magnificent and unresting energy! It has the mark of true greatness." Why should any German resent the warning of Lord Roberts? He does not impute to the German nation any policy which was not our policy in the centuries in which we first conquered and then consolidated our own Empire. Confronted first by Spain in the reign of Elizabeth, and then, in the centuries that followed, by France, we rose to Imperial greatness by carrying out the very principles which Lord Roberts notes as existent in modern Germany. Who are we that we should invite Germany to acquiesce in the principles of "Uti Possidetis" at a moment when we possess comparatively everything and they possess comparatively nothing? It is a law as old as the world's history that those who hold valuable possessions coveted by others will hold them so long as, and no longer than, they are able to protect them by the strong arm. The unification of Germany was finally effected at a late stage in the history of the world. Until that unification became a fact, Germany was unable to compete in that great struggle for maritime efficiency, the fruits of which to England were our world-wide Empire. Is it pretended that we can reasonably say to Germany, "All this we won while you were still in swaddling-clothes, but in the days of your adult vigour, and whatever be your strength in relation to ours, the rules of law and of morality forbid an appeal by you to the weapons with which in old days we conquered what to-day we hold"?

It is then pretended by those who know as little of

international law as they do of any other law, that Lord Roberts has imputed to the German nation an intention to act in violation of the accepted principles of international law. This charge, recklessly and ignorantly advanced, makes it necessary to call attention to some of the more elementary fallacies which pass current amongst ill-informed people as to the nature of that loose body of rules which is compendiously described as "international law." Professors and pedants, naturally willing to exaggerate the importance of the science to which they devote themselves, are accustomed to speak of international law as if it bore some real analogy to what is technically known as municipal law, but which may more conveniently be described as the domestic law of an individual community. There is no such analogy. The term "law" when applied to international law is merely metaphorical, as metaphorical as its use in the phrases "law of refraction" or "law of gravity." It was long since pointed out that when the expression "law of gravity" is employed all that is meant is that objects do, in fact, gravitate. If the term "law" be analysed it is evident that, while other elements enter into the conception, far the most characteristic and indispensable is the element of coerciveness: in other words, the conception of "law" postulates the existence of some superior competent to enforce its observation by whatever instruments may be adequate for that purpose. The proposition here is stated simply and untechnically and without recourse to the Austinian refinement of analysis, which, however unanswerable, might be criticised as over-subtle for our present purpose. If a man breaks a law in a civilised community he comes at once into collision with a superior authority competent, in the first place, to decide that he has broken a law, and competent, in the second place, to punish him for his breach,

or to exact from him such redress as may under the circumstances be proper. In the forum of nations no such liabilities are to be apprehended by the wrong-doer. One rule of international law which may be stated in three lines is sufficient to refute the claim of three thousand volumes that international practice is entitled to the appellation of "law." It is conceded, even by the theorists, that any nation is entitled to go to war, whenever it chooses, if a national interest is threatened, and it is conceded, too, that every nation, as an indispensable element in its independence, is entitled to be the sole judge of whether or not a particular set of circumstances is of such a character as to threaten its vital interests. It follows from these admissions, which are sometimes thinly veiled in the immense volumes of theoretic writers, but which have been openly avowed by diplomatists and men of action for centuries, that any nation which is prepared to go to war to enforce its views can treat with contempt the academic admonitions of text-books. It is an entirely irrelevant criticism to reply that a nation wantonly, and for the purposes of self-interest, provoking a war will justly incur the censure of the civilised world. It often similarly happens that the strict exercise of a legal right is contrary to well-understood ethical standards. It follows from these considerations that Lord Roberts was absolutely justified from the point of view of international law in his retrospect of Germany's past, and in his anticipation of Germany's future, and it is very necessary to remember that under modern practice the nation which is ready for war, and is prepared at a convenient moment to stake everything upon the hazard of war, has an enormous advantage over the nation which does not contemplate and is desirous of avoiding war. For many generations the older writers on inter-

national law insisted that war must be preceded by a formal declaration, but even as early as the days of Grotius it was recognised that by the laws of nations hostilities might properly be commenced immediately on the declaration of war. The necessity of a declaration even if, contrary to the better modern view, it were maintained would, therefore, afford no security whatever to the Power against whom it was directed. The message conveying the declaration may properly be followed by the mobilisation of the whole army of the declarant Power. The resolution of the second Hague Conference on 7th September 1907 strongly confirms this view. It is true that at a full sitting the following regulations were adopted:—

> "(1) The contracting powers recognise that hostilities between them ought not to commence without a preceding and unequivocal notice, which shall have the form either of a declaration of war expressing its motives, or of an ultimatum with a conditional declaration of war. (2) The state of war must be notified without delay to the neutral powers, and will produce no effect with relation to them until their receipt of a notification which may even be made by telegraph. It is, however, understood that neutral powers will not be able to plead the absence of a notification, if it is established in no doubtful manner that in fact they knew of the state of war."

The illusory character of this regulation is sufficiently illustrated by the fact that the subscribing parties pointedly declined to contract that they would not commence hostilities against one another otherwise than under the circumstances indicated, and merely recognised

"that hostilities ought not to be otherwise commenced." The comment made by Professor Westlake upon the resultant practice is both lucid and conclusive: "Nothing can more clearly show the impossibility of insisting on an interval of notice between a declaration of war and a commencement of hostilities under it, than the fact that the very moderate proposal of a twenty-four hours' interval made by the delegation of the Netherlands was not accepted. The Conference has, therefore, rather confirmed than weakened the necessity that, in order not to be taken unprepared, every nation must rely on its own vigilance and on no formal rule."

Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show that the existence of a Power upon the other side of the German Ocean reasonably desirous of expansion, equipped with strength, adequate when exercised at the psychological moment, to secure expansion, and able without any breach of international usage to select that moment, must be a source of constant anxiety to the Power at whose expense alone that expansion is possible. Nearly all the great antagonisms of history have arisen from similar circumstances. Such conflicts were anterior to the dawn of civilisation and to the spread of Christianity, but neither civilisation nor Christianity has availed to abate in the slightest degree the elemental passions and ambitions of humanity. Abuse of Germany for doing what we ourselves did, and for cherishing ambitions which every powerful nation at every stage of the world's history has entertained, is childish, irrelevant, and futile. History laughs at such criticisms. Lord Roberts made no such mistake. With penetrating instinct he stated his admiration of German temper and German discipline. Every virile citizen of any nationality, and, indeed, every person whose judgment is not debauched by a sentimentalism

wholly out of contact with facts, will echo Lord Roberts' tribute. Abuse, disapproval, and pious exhortations are all utterly useless. Only one thing is useful. This country, if it means to survive, must develop its preparations upon the same scale and in the same spirit as does the great nation whose ambitions and development we are examining. The fundamental menace by which we are confronted is that the nation which has at its disposal the mightiest military instrument in the world, and probably the mightiest military instrument which has ever in history been swiftly available at the bidding of a single Power, is rapidly completing a Navy comparable to ours in strength, distinguishable from ours in strength only by meticulous calculations, and so disposed strategically as to paralyse that far-flung distribution of the British Navy over the oceans of the world which is required by the defensive necessities of a scattered Empire. We are asked to believe that the British Navy will not be conquered. We hope this is true; we believe it is true; but the pages of history and the dark records of national failure are full of this easy optimism. The prospects, on the existing ratio of strength and on the ratio which will exist in the next three years, are at least disputable, if we suppose, as would assuredly be the case, that a moment were selected for the attack when there was some momentary dissipation of our strength from northern waters. These considerations supply an overwhelming reason for substituting the Two-to-one standard for the Two-Power standard. But it may reasonably be urged that the supposition of the complete defeat of the Navy carries the advocates of national service too far. It may be contended that, if the Navy is annihilated, no perfection of national service could save the United Kingdom from swift starvation, and that if we are to

be starved into surrender it matters little whether we undergo starvation with or without military training. This observation is, as far as it goes, well founded, but the reply is twofold. The advocates of national service are advocates of a Navy which, humanly speaking, is invincible: they sweep away any proposals which render necessary a nice calculation of heads or of Dreadnoughts. The superiority with which alone they would be content is a superiority which rises superior to argumentative enumeration. If this ideal be attained the hypothesis of conquest may be rejected, but there remain risks and contingencies of overwhelming gravity if the nation is untrained in arms, but negligible, or almost negligible, if the nation is so trained. The Fleet may be temporarily absent, it may be decoyed from home waters by stratagem, or it may be diverted into very distant waters by international complications which may themselves suggest opportunity to a vigilant enemy. Every day the swift progress of mechanical invention diminishes the practical difficulties of a "snap" invasion. Such an invasion would have no terrors for, and would never be directed against, a nation whose manhood had been trained to bear arms in self-defence. Circumstances are conceivable in which it might, under existing conditions, succeed against a nation whose men are unable to defend its women, if the initial difficulties of conveyance and debarkation were surmounted. It may be replied that these difficulties are very great, and that it is extremely improbable that they will be surmounted. Both these statements are true; but what great country, unless suffering from blindness or madness, will stake its future upon improbabilities? We require the most absolute security and we do not possess it.

From another point of view the argument is even

more overwhelming. Let us exclude for a moment, as many competent critics do, the possibility of invasion. Let us assume that whatever other merits national service may possess, it cannot reasonably be supported by the apprehension of invasion: there would still remain many reasons why we ought to adopt it and ought to adopt it at once. In the present position of European politics it is almost universally recognised by men of all parties that we in this country cannot stand by and see France crushed. On at least two occasions in the last five years a position has developed from which the consequence above adverted to might easily have emerged. Many arguments might plausibly be advanced with the object of showing that if the country as a whole is convinced of the necessity of maintaining the national integrity of France we should be well advised to substitute a formal and public alliance for a private *entente* of undiscoverable commitments. But this subject is too long for examination here, and the position must be argued in reference to existing facts. On the two occasions to which reference has been made this country was on the verge of a European war. On at least one of them a nation wholly unprepared for such a contingency might have found itself, with hardly a day's warning, once again engaged in military operations upon a European battlefield. Much has been said in praise of the efficiency and organisation of our Expeditionary Force. No Englishman will consent to disparage either the valour of our soldiers or the training and devotion of our officers, but no student of military history who is familiar with the wastage of modern war, and who recollects the lessons of South Africa and the Manchurian battlefields, will contemplate without horror the engagement of English troops amid the vast armies of Europe, knowing

that it means the employment of soldiers who cannot be replaced amid an enemy capable of almost indefinite replacement. At this point military and political considerations are inextricably involved. Either we must make up our minds that we will not take part in a European war under any circumstances, or we must have national service; but we cannot make up our minds on the first of these points unless we are prepared to do what our ancestors to their eternal glory refused to do in the days of Napoleon, acquiesce in the hegemony of Europe by one titanic Power. Ill-natured critics, who never even troubled to read Lord Roberts' speech, have accused him of making an attack upon the Territorial Force. Lord Roberts went out of his way to recognise the zeal and intelligence of the patriotic men who compose the Force, but he stated what every competent critic knows to be the literal truth when he alleged that it was a failure in discipline, a failure in numbers, a failure in equipment, and a failure in energy. It always will be a failure as long as the period during which it undergoes military training and discipline is insufficient to make soldiers of any men, however willing and zealous they may be. If these observations are well founded it follows that we cannot look to the Territorial Force as it is, or as under existing conditions it can be made, to supplement the numerical deficiencies of the regular Army. Once again, then, it may be simply stated that we shall be forced to abdicate our position in Europe and ultimately our position as a great world-Empire, unless the citizens of this country are prepared to take upon themselves the burdens which are cheerfully borne by the manhood of every other great country in the world. Surely the present moment supplies us with an object-lesson of unmatched clearness upon the material and moral rewards given to nations, how-

ever small, who are prepared to equip themselves to fight their own battles. The Balkan States consist of small communities, the largest of them hardly exceeding in numbers a populous English county. After centuries of oppression they have won a glorious independence and wrenched from rapine and oppression, amid the applause of Europe, a vast tract to Christianity and civilisation. Have these causes lost, it may be asked, or have they gained on the balance by the readiness of the citizens of these States to undergo national service? Can anyone doubt that these causes would gain equally by an accession of defensive military strength to a country unprovocative as we are unprovocative, and passionately desirous of peace as we are desirous of peace?

It is sometimes stated that the Conservative Party is antagonistic to Germany. Indeed, I recently met a very influential German who was convinced that the Unionist Party if returned to power would manufacture a pretext for going to war with Germany. No more profound misapprehension ever existed. The Unionist Party would regard such a war as the same crime against civilisation which it would seem to the general mass of English citizens. There is hardly any sacrifice which we would not make to avoid such a war, and it is because we are certain that the way to avoid it is to be strong that we recommend to our countrymen the sacrifices involved in national service.

We realise, it is true, that no Government can in such a matter move in advance of public opinion without defeating its own objects, but deep responsibility rests upon every Englishman who is convinced by the arguments in favour of national service to take part, according to the measure of his powers and his

opportunities, in that education of his fellow-citizens which, and which alone, can preserve the Empire from destruction and its citizens from that contempt with which virile nations have through the ages branded those who are unable to protect their Home, their Faith, and their Fatherland.

V

THE HOME RULE BILL

Any man to whom the original Home Rule struggle of the middle 'eighties is a historic memory rather than a crisis in which he himself played a part must regard with curious feelings the introduction of an actual Home Rule Bill into the House of Commons. The very possibility of such a measure passing into law will burst on the present generation of Unionists and non-party men as a whole with something of the shock of a nightmare come true. It is as though one suddenly found oneself face to face in real life with some pre-historic monster out of a picture-book. It is, of course, perfectly true that those whose business it is to study political developments and to expound their tendencies either by speech or writing to the electorate, have long foreseen and prophesied this final culmination of the Coalition conspiracy against the Constitution. We have known all along as a matter of political reason that every move in the Liberal game, since the election of 1910 cost Liberalism its independent majority, has been dictated by the Redmondite determination to try and slip Home Rule through without a general election on the clearly cut issue — Union *versus* Separatism. But it is one thing to suspect a design: it is another to get other people to believe it. It is

for this reason that at the last two general elections the plain and persistent warnings of the Unionist leaders that a Coalition victory meant Home Rule, without an appeal to the people, fell, on the whole, on deaf ears. A vast electorate lives naturally enough less by the calculations of pure reason than by the inspiration of a lively faith, and to the present generation of electors Home Rule had become a *chose jugée*, a book of controversy finally closed by two successive judgments of the nation, and by a large measure of consent between the two great political parties. Nor, indeed, was such a view unnatural in the light of historical experience. The Liberal Party which followed Russell, Palmerston, and Gladstone up to 1885, held the same views on the government of Ireland as the Conservative Party which followed Liverpool, Peel, and Disraeli. Again, from the fall of Parnell in 1890 to the general election of 1892, English and Scotch opinion was so consistently hostile as to make Unionist feeling one of passive rather than active resistance to Mr Gladstone's proposals. There was a faint flicker of interest again when the Lords threw out the second Home Rule Bill, and then with Mr Gladstone's retirement and Lord Rosebery's accession to power the plan was put in the Liberal lumber-room, and both parties ceased even to think of it, until, as in 1885 and 1892, a Liberal Ministry found itself once more, after fifteen years, dependent on Nationalist votes. In a word, the British public has been interested in the Home Rule issue as was the Emperor Gallienus in politics—by spasms. It has been excited only during those few of the last hundred years when there has been a Bill before the Legislature, and there has seemed some chance of that Bill being driven through. For the rest of the time, English public opinion has

always been against the Repeal of the Union: so much against it, indeed, that it has refused as a rule to believe that any party would be sufficiently insane to put a Home Rule Bill before the electorate, or so wicked as to pass one without electoral consent.

Unionists, therefore, had no need to be disheartened at their failure to convince the people of the reality of the danger at the last general election. The Bill has been produced now: the murder is out: and there is not much doubt what the verdict will be. The danger is no longer the apathy of the electorate: it is that owing to their apathy and scepticism in the past the electors may find themselves outwitted by the present holders of power. The country sold its birthright of a free constitution: it may get in exchange a mess of Irish pottage thrust down its unwilling throat. For reasons which I will state later on, I do not think this final catastrophe can overtake the nation, but many bitter waters will have to be traversed before all the proximate effects of the Parliament Bill can be undone. The majority of men have lived so long in peace and contentment under the ægis of the constitution that it will require the fierce struggles of the next two years to convince them that the constitution was not merely an ancient symbol and a venerable name, but a living organism, the destruction of which by partisans is bringing the country to the verge of civil war.

At last, then, we have the Bill. After all these appointments of secret Commissions, after all the running to and fro between Dublin and Downing Street, and all the efforts to stretch the maximum which any British party dare offer to meet the minimum which any Nationalist leader dare accept, the bargain has been concluded. The battle raged over custom

and excise up till the last moment, when Ministers threw over the recommendations of their own Select Committee. According to the official view, voters at the last general election must have been endowed with a power of prevision so miraculous as to be positively prophetic. Fifteen months ago they knew and approved of a Bill the terms of which were not known to Ministers a month before that Bill was introduced. Nor is that all. In the Bill as it was originally drafted it was proposed to set up a nominated Senate in Ireland. As the Bill now stands the Senate is to be chosen on the system of proportional representation. This very important change was made by the Government when the Bill was in Committee. Yet the discussion on the clause dealing with the composition of the Senate had already begun before the Government amendment was produced, and the Committee was actually expected to debate amendments on the Government's proposals before it even knew what the Government proposed. It did not know, because until the last moment the Government did not know itself. So we have the entertaining doctrine that long before a Bill has been drafted the people can divine not only what it will be when it is introduced, but what it will be after it has been amended. This is indeed a new application of the doctrine of "trusting the people." You trust the people to know what you are going to do before you know it yourself—and then you take elaborate precautions not to consult them after you do know, for fear they may have misinterpreted your intentions. We have heard lately of the new style: this evidently is the New Democracy!

But yet, whatever the democracy may have thought about a Home Rule Bill, in so far as it thought of it

at all, one can be confident that it never contemplated the production of such a complicated form of separatist lunacy as the Bill which has just passed the House of Commons. There was about Mr Gladstone's proposals, if we accept the absurd "in-and-out" clause for Nationalists, a certain wide and clear sweep, something of a bold if desperate attempt to reach a finality of relationship between the two countries even at the cost of unpopularity in England or dissatisfaction in Ireland. When facing an insuperable difficulty, Mr Gladstone at least faced it like a man. With all his emotional wrongheadedness and tactical ingenuity, he had fire and enthusiasm and courage. His successors are by comparison petty men—and, because they are themselves petty, their plan is full of petty devices for dodging the unavoidable, concealing what can never be hid, and plastering over the rocks of stony and inexorable fact with pious words and phrases. The best (or worst) example of these devices is the proposal that Ireland while having a Parliament of her own should still be able to send forty-two members to the British House of Commons with full rights to join in debates, vote in divisions, and draw a salary. This is in itself sufficient to condemn the Bill as an unworkable measure. It is the fourth proposal that a Radical Government has made to settle this question. The other three are total exclusion of Irish members, inclusion in full numbers for all debates, and inclusion only for those debates in which they are directly interested—the "in-and-out" clause. These three schemes have had very unhappy histories. Each of them in turn has been riddled with criticisms first from one side of the House then from the other. Each by universal consent stands condemned. There are damning arguments against all three, and these arguments have been forcibly and

tersely summarised by Lord Morley, a member of the present Ministry. In his life of Mr Gladstone he wrote: "Each of the three courses is open to one simple but very direct objection. Exclusion, along with the exclusion of revenue from Ireland by the Parliament at Westminster, is taxation without representation. Inclusion for all purposes is to allow the Irish to meddle in our affairs while we are no longer to meddle with their affairs. Inclusion for a limited purpose still leaves them invested with the power of turning out the British Government by voting against it on an Imperial question. Each plan, therefore, ends in a paradox. There is a fourth paradox, namely that whenever the British supporters of the Government did not suffice to build up a decisive majority, then the Irish vote, descending to one or other scale of the Parliamentary balance, might decide who shall be our rulers." This last argument, that as long as Irish members are admitted to our debates they will be able to control the fate of British Governments, is an unanswered and unanswerable argument. It at once condemns the proposal in the present Bill. For that proposal is simply the old inclusion-for-all-purposes clause in a milder form. Theoretically it is as unsound; in practice it is only less dangerous, because, since the numbers of the Irish will be diminished, the occasions on which they will hold the balance between the English parties may be fewer. It is for this feeble virtue that the Prime Minister attempts to recommend a proposal which on its real merits he dare not defend. In his speech in Committee on the clause he had every opportunity of dealing with this main argument against the clause. The argument was used. The Prime Minister replied to the speaker who had used it. In the middle of his own speech it was pointed out to him that the argument had been

used. But he still refused to mention it. He is content to remain on the ground which he took up in his first reading speech: that so small a number of Nationalists remaining in the British Parliament will rarely if ever affect a division. Let us see if this is true. Let us take the Prime Minister's own calculation that out of the forty-two Irish members thirty-four will be Nationalists, so that that party will have a majority of twenty-six. On at least twenty occasions since 1831 critical divisions have taken place in the House in which the majorities were so small that those twenty-six votes would have held the balance. Within this present year alone there have been no fewer than twelve divisions in which the same thing would have happened. So that with only forty-two Irish members in the British House of Commons, it is apparent that the Nationalist party will still be able, not only to settle matters which are of purely British concern, but, in Lord Morley's words, "to decide who shall be our rulers."

Then there are the "safeguards!" In the control of the police, in finance, in customs and excise, in the relations between the Irish and the British Parliament, infinite ingenuity has been expended in disguising the naked realities of the situation. The only possible result of these devices would be that even if you deceived the British electorate you would do so at the cost of setting up such a perpetual friction between the two countries as would lead either to complete independence or to a forcible resumption of Union by the predominant partner. It is difficult enough to set up a Hungary in the United Kingdom, but if you are going to attempt it you had better attempt it boldly. As it is, Ministers seem to have tried to solve the difficulties of the situation by a twofold and disingenuous course. By the

establishment of an Irish Parliament with an Executive responsible to it they propose to set up a new sovereign power in Ireland—and so presumably to satisfy the Nationalists—the men who believe that Ireland is a separate nation. By the creation of a vast number of legislative safeguards designed to circumscribe the free action of the Irish Parliament they hope to conciliate the hostile opinion of the rest of Great Britain and to persuade the electorate that no change of any real importance has been made. Never was there a more fatal attempt to secure an immoral compromise. To secure the Nationalist support, the Cabinet give to the majority in Ireland executive control, or an executive capable of exercising complete control: to secure British acquiescence they then propose to check the free operation of that Irish executive by a series of restrictions and by an elaborate process of appeals which would bring the Irish and the Imperial Parliament, and the Irish and the Imperial Executive, into the most violent collision before the new system had been established a twelvemonth.

It is worth while quoting the Prime Minister's own words in moving the first reading of the Bill: "We go on to provide, in order that the Irish Parliament may not transcend its constitutional limits, two additional safeguards. In the first place, there is the veto of the Lord-Lieutenant under the seventh clause of the Bill, which provides that he shall give or withhold his consent to Bills passed by the two Houses of the Irish Parliament subject to two limitations—namely, that he shall comply with any instructions given by his Majesty —that means the Imperial Executive in this country" (a tactful reminder of recent constitutional history) "in respect of any such Bill, and next he shall, if so directed by his Majesty" (that again refers to the Imperial Ex-

ecutive). "postpone giving the assent of his Majesty to any such Bill for any such period as his Majesty" (that is the Executive) "may direct. *So we reserve completely unimpaired the supremacy and the responsibility of the Executive here and the power of vetoing or postponing any legislation which the Irish Parliament may pass.*"

Do we? Let me quote another passage from the Prime Minister's speech — an observation about the powers of the Irish Parliament squeezed in among pages of talk about the reservation of powers denied to it. "The Bill therefore proceeds in its first and second clauses to declare that after the appointed day *there shall be in Ireland an Irish Parliament consisting of his Majesty the King and two Houses, viz., the Irish Senate and the Irish House of Commons. What are the legislative powers of that Parliament? It is to have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Ireland.*" Then follow the limitations—religion, the reserved services, the Army and Navy, and all the rest. I will leave these aside, for it is in the essence of the principle of safeguards that the root of the whole matter lies.

As the situation stands under the quotations given, any of the measures of an Irish Parliament with an Executive responsible to it might be vetoed by the Imperial Executive and the Imperial Parliament. But this is not the end of the matter. Apparently a new High Court such as exists in the United States is to decide whether any legislative act of the Irish Parliament is or is not within the powers conferred on it by the proposed Bill. "If any question arises," says the Prime Minister, "as to the validity of an Irish Act, as to whether it is or is not within the powers conferred by this statute, it will be settled, if it arises in the course

of ordinary litigation which involves any such problem, first by the Irish Court of Appeal, and on appeal from it by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and next—even though the matter does not arise in the course of litigation—at the instance of the Lord-Lieutenant or the Secretary of State here by a special reference to the Judicial Committee, which will determine the point even before the Act has come into operation."

If anyone will place these three extracts side by side he will arrive at certain conclusions. In the first place, the new Irish Parliament is to have a free hand in Ireland subject to reserved questions. In the second place, there is to be an absolute Imperial veto on all Irish legislation. In the third place, the Irish Government is not to have a free hand in Ireland, nor the Imperial Parliament an absolute right of veto. On the contrary, the delimitation of legislative or corrective powers under the Bill is to be left to a legal authority —the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. A system more likely to lead to persistent friction between the two countries it would be impossible to conceive. The union of hearts is apparently to be abolished : the substitute is to be that feeling of brotherhood habitually found among clients who are fighting each other persistently in the courts of justice. Further, it appears from the Prime Minister's speech that a legal point cannot be raised by a private citizen on appeal against the action of the Irish Executive unless the Irish Secretary or Lord-Lieutenant as Imperial representative consents to raise a case against his own principals in Ireland. On the other hand, these officials can always appeal to a legal tribunal to invalidate, in the interests of the Imperial Executive which they represent, the actions of the Irish Parliament. Such a clumsy,

botched-up scheme is inevitable, of course, in any attempt to set up two diverse parliamentary authorities —while claiming that one is independent and that the other is supreme. The scheme would not survive six months of legal and legislative practice: it would collapse under the weight of its own ineptitude.

The reasons of that collapse are sufficiently obvious and are inherent in the scheme of relations suggested between the Irish and the Imperial Parliaments. Every judicial decision would become a subject of electoral agitation and of political contention between the two powers and the two electorates affected. If the case went against the Irish contention the Irish Executive would in four cases out of five be able to make the judicial decision inoperative simply by refusing to employ the ordinary resources of civilisation to enforce it. In the remaining cases the Imperial Government would be obliged through the powers and services it proposes to retain, to embark on a policy repugnant to the sentiment of the Irish Government. What would be the result? The Irish Ministry would resign—no alternative Ministry could be formed—the internal administration of Ireland would become impossible except by the repeal of the Home Rule Bill, by the enforcement of a crown colony system of government, or by an utter abdication of power on the part of the Imperial Government.

All these objections apply to the very conception of safeguards. What is the use of the veto of the Lord-Lieutenant if the effect of his veto is to deprive him of the services of a majority in the Irish Parliament? If the Irish Government bring in a measure for the Establishment of Catholicism against the terms of the Bill, and the Lord-Lieutenant vetoes it, and the Imperial Executive vetoes it, and the Imperial Parlia-

ment decides against it, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council declares it illegal, what does that help the United Kingdom and the Protestants of Ireland, if the Government of Ireland cannot be carried on unless all these powers and principalities accept the decision of the National majority? No Imperial Parliament could allow the whole Irish state to deliquesce in default of a Government into its constituent elements —nor could it in effect carry on without a civil war the administration of the reserved services under conditions which meant that there was no Irish Parliament. The Imperial Parliament would be in a worse position than a Stuart monarch trying to govern by the simple expedient of never summoning a parliament. Such a conception is reactionary and impossible. What it means is, that if you once establish an Irish Parliament with an executive responsible to it, you have parted with all real control over Ireland short of a repeal of the proposed Bill or a reconquest by arms. The safeguards—the veto and the rest—are worth less than the paper they are written on; because they can never be enforced if the Irish Ministry of the day threatens to resign, and so to leave the unfortunate Lord-Lieutenant without an alternative Ministry. Ireland must, in a word, as the history of five centuries has proved, either be left as an independent nation owing nothing but a vague allegiance to the Crown, or it must remain an integral part of the United Kingdom. In the latter case its citizens must possess, as they possess to-day, the rights that the inhabitants of England, Scotland, and Wales possess, and neither less nor more.

For these reasons, and for other hardly less apparent, the safeguards are worthless. Nor are we alone in this view. It is shared by the Prime Minister. Let us see how the mind of the Government has changed,

from those earlier declarations that everything would be done to protect Ulster from the dangers which she feared, to the later declaration of the Prime Minister that the safeguards in the Bill are worthless. The change has been as rapid as it is complete. In a speech at Bristol, Mr Birrell said, "Safeguards have been inserted in the Bill, but we are met with the reply, 'Your safeguards are of no use,' to which I will say, 'Then name your own safeguards.' . . . Let the other side produce safeguards if they have them." This was said on 18th October. Four days later an opportunity was given to the House to test the sincerity of Mr Birrell's offer. In an amendment to Clause 3, Mr Astor proposed to insert words which would prevent the Irish Parliament from making any law "whereby any person may be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law in accordance with settled principles and precedents, or may be denied the equal protection of the laws, or whereby private property may be taken without just compensation." These words state the simple and elementary rights of every citizen, and are to be found in the Bill of 1893 as they appear in the amendment. No one would dare to deny those rights, nor, I should have thought, would any Government refuse to protect them. But this Government has refused. It rejected the amendment, and its reasons (as given) were two. It was objected by the Prime Minister, firstly, that such phrases as "settled principles," "equal protection of the laws," and "just compensation" were too ambiguous for the Courts to be left to decide. It is amazing that any man, more amazing still that any lawyer, should use such an argument. Mr Asquith must be perfectly well aware that the Courts are continually called upon to interpret such phrases; and even if he

has forgotten his own experience at the Bar, he cannot have forgotten that the Government in which he was Chancellor of the Exchequer passed a Workmen's Compensation Act which imposes on the Courts the almost daily duty of deciding what "just compensation" is. The second argument was even more contemptible. The Prime Minister objected that the amendment "enthroned the judiciary as the ultimate tribunal of appeal." It did nothing of the sort, because the Prime Minister had already done this himself when he gave the Irish Court of Appeal the right to decide on the validity of an Irish Act.[1]

Thus in four days the position had become clearer. In another seven days the circle was complete. On 29th October, Clause 7 was under discussion in Committee, and on that clause the Prime Minister delivered an amazing speech. He confessed himself to be a "credulous optimist," openly abandoned Mr Birrell's pretence that the Government were anxious to give to the minority the safeguards that it desired, and with a frankness never before equalled, applied to politics the doctrine of the blind eye. "If you accept my hypothesis," he said, "the question of the actual working of the veto becomes comparatively simple. *If I accept your hypothesis, I agree that the veto (of the Lord-Lieutenant) is absolutely worthless.*" This second hypothesis is the hypothesis accepted by all Unionists, that the Ulster fears of injustice, ill-usage, and oppression under a Nationalist Government, are well founded. The veto of the Lord-Lieutenant is one of the safeguards for the protection of the Protestant minority. It is to this absurdity then that we have come. Safeguards

[1] No Nationalist members took part in the debate on Mr Astor's amendment, but it is worthy of notice that they were opposed to it when it stood as a clause in the Bill of 1893.

are offered to allay the fear of the minority, but it is at the same time admitted that if the fears are realised the safeguards will be worthless. This is indeed a paper constitution. The whole elaborate structure of "safeguards" has been raised on the assumption that it will not be required. If this assumption is false, then, for the reasons that I have given, the Irish constitution will at once wear itself to pieces.

As Norway and Sweden, Austria and Hungary, have proved beyond cavil, you cannot have a dual sovereignty, however carefully disguised, based on separate national ideas, without perpetual friction, leading in the long run to complete separation. And if you are prepared to contemplate separation, you had better have separation first and not last. You had better have separation as the result of mutual consent than as the ultimate fruit of mutual irritation and conflict. The Government Bill gives unity in name, separation in essence, and the perverted ingenuity of its ridiculous safeguards even ensures that legal separation will result from a bitter and protracted conflict which will leave the two populations under separate governments animated by the odium of sentiments which these long struggles must inevitably bring in their train. This Bill is designed to lose Ireland without conciliating her, and to break up the Empire in order to establish an inveterate enemy on one flank. When Mr Asquith talks about Ireland as a nation he gives his whole case away. If Ireland is a nation apart, she must have her separate government, and Imperial safeguards are to her a mere futile insult: if she is not a nation apart, why should her inhabitants not be content to share the equal rights enjoyed by the citizens of the United Kingdom? Between separation and Union there is no middle course.

But if anyone replies to me that Irish Home Rulers will accept this Bill as a final settlement, and will not be irritated by the futile restrictions placed on the Irish Parliament by the provisions of the Bill, I can only answer that they know little of Ireland, less of Irish history, and less still of political human nature. Who will be the more popular member of the Irish Nationalist Parliament or the more popular candidate in the constituencies out of Ulster—the man who by speech and vote defends the integrity of the Imperial safeguards whether in constitutional or financial matters, or the man who declares that every such safeguard is an insult to Irish Nationality and should be abolished or ignored? To ask the question is to answer it. Was Butt with his constitutional methods a match for Parnell when the Fenians discovered that under his leadership "Parliamentarianism was becoming respectable"? The extremists have always had the best of it in Ireland except in so far as the ameliorative measures of British statesmanship and British credit have under the Union begun to establish a really sound social and economic condition of affairs. But Mr Dillon told us on the first reading of the Bill that in his opinion it was only the No Rent Campaign which produced the Unionist scheme of Land Purchase. It is in this spirit that the Irish leaders approach the Ireland of the future. They will and they must, if they are not to be turned out, as Butt was turned out, agitate and obstruct until the last shreds of Imperial control have disappeared for ever. Like the Labour members in recent years, they must either take the extreme course or give way and make place for those who will.

I have dealt at length with the question of Constitutional safeguards because they are of the very substance and essence of the Bill. The considerations which

make those safeguards inoperative apply to all those checks on financial or religious legislation which are proposed by the Government. The greater objections cover the less. In all cases you will have friction leading to separation, and no control short of the determination of the Imperial Government to do what it did in the case of Grattan's Parliament, and force Ireland once more back into the Union.

The customs and excise proposals appear to be of such a complicated nature that even Mr Samuel, who is supposed to be the Government expert in these matters, has been unable to explain them to the House. The whole arrangement, after the Government rejected the separatist suggestions of their Financial Committee, were in a state of what Governor Pitt called "hellish confusion." Two facts alone, as Mr Balfour has pointed out, have emerged with any clearness from the general welter. In the first place, two separate customs rates will be set up in the two countries. In the second place, the whole of our international arrangements under the most favoured nation clause will be placed in jeopardy.

As an example of the difficulties and contradictions in which the financial clauses have involved the Government let us take Clause 16. This clause contains very important provisions; it defines the trade relations between England and Ireland when the customs and excise duties of the two countries on any article are dissimilar; but it was passed in Committee under the guillotine without a word of discussion. I choose it for this reason, and because it well illustrates the double contradiction in which the Government is entangled. It professedly believes in Federalism, but it ignores all federalist theory and

experience by setting up customs within the federated states; it is professedly a Free Trade Government, but it gives protection to Ireland. This is the not unnatural result of drawing up its Bill in collaboration with men who are both separatists and protectionists.

By Clause 16, sub-section A, it is provided that if Ireland sends a dutiable article to England, duty shall be charged as if the article came from a foreign country; but if the article, say tobacco, has come from abroad but been manufactured in Ireland, it will not pay the full English duty, but a duty equal to the drawback, if that drawback is less than the duty, which English manufacturers are allowed when they export their manufactured tobacco. Let us see how this will work. A manufacturer to-day pays a duty of 3s. 8d. a pound on raw tobacco leaf; but on exporting the tobacco made up into, say, cigarettes, he receives a drawback of 4s. 1d. a pound. The extra fivepence is given him to cover the loss of tobacco in manufacture and the cost in which the regulations imposed on manufacture have involved him. But the customs duty on manufactured tobacco is 5s. 8d. a pound. Under sub-section A of Clause 16 the Irish tobacco manufacturer will pay on sending his cigarettes into England not the full duty of 5s. 8d. which is imposed on foreign cigarettes, but a duty equal to the drawback allowed to English manufacturers when they export, that is 4s. 1d. So that he will receive on each pound of cigarettes a preference of 1s. 7d. in 5s. 8d., which is a preference of nearly 28 per cent.

I could multiply examples of the protective nature of the customs arrangements, of the difficulties they will cause, and the friction they will engender. But this

example is sufficient. It is of greater importance to consider the larger financial arrangements between the two countries. England, Scotland, and Wales are to pay something between six and seven millions a year for the privilege of giving Ireland a separate Parliament. Half a million is to be given as a direct subsidy to the cause of separatism. A million and a half represents the present Irish deficit, while the rest of the sum is to be made up by the increasing cost of Land Purchase, Old Age Pensions and Insurance, and by relieving Ireland of all share in the payment of the National Debt and military forces of the Empire. This last proposal is enough to make Mr Gladstone turn in his grave. The Prime Minister, indeed, had the decency to conceal these figures in so far as concealment was possible. He knew he was advancing a proposal which would be resented deeply by the tax-payers of the United Kingdom and accordingly he slurred the whole question over. But the figures are now established, and they cannot be disputed. England and Scotland are to pay in order that the Nationalists may have a Parliament which England and Scotland do not want, and which the Nationalists want, but will not pay for. As far as the United Kingdom is concerned, one might as well charge a man for the expense of hanging him. To finance separatism out of Unionist money is the final effort of Ministerial humour. The only answer to this objection so far advanced by Liberals is that their own legislation has already made Ireland the debtor of England. England under the Union has given Ireland social benefits she could not have afforded under the separatist system. If Liberals have always been, as they tell us, Home Rulers, they might have thought of this before they spent the money.

These Imperial doles or remissions to the subordinate Parliament are not only serious in amount but extraordinarily dangerous in principle and effect. Let us examine the failure of Ireland to contribute to the Common Fund for national defence. It is not only an act of separatism of the most glaring character, but the very spirit of disunion which underlies the arrangement must grow by what it feeds on. We tell Ireland in effect that a great foreign war for the defence of the Empire is no concern of hers. The greater part of the expenses would be met again, as they have been met before, not out of current income but out of loans. England and Scotland are asked to pay for the defence of a country because that country desires to indulge in a form of semi-separation from them. The impertinence of the suggestion almost takes away one's breath. Consider the case of the South African War. The only way in which the British Exchequer could have obtained, under the Bill, any contribution from Ireland would have been by using the ultimate power of the Imperial Parliamant to levy taxes in Ireland at the very moment when the Nationalist members were cheering Lord Methuen's defeat. A passive- or active-resistance rebellion would spring into being just when Great Britain was concentrating all her efforts on a great struggle for national preservation. Ireland would thus become in the future, as it has so often been in the past, the Achilles' heel of the British Empire. But worse even than this would be the moral effect on the whole spirit of Imperial unity for defence. Ireland is to be a kind of kept island, a military parasite left to dream her own dreams apart, while the heat of the international day is borne by the rest of the Imperial Dominions.

Not less important from another point of view

are the "financial arrangements for the reserved services."

These charges for Land Purchase, Insurance, Old Age Pensions, etc., are practically all of them progressive items of expenditure, and will rise to at least an additional million in the immediate future. The contention is that we should have to face this expenditure in any case, since Irish taxation falls short of Irish expenses by about one and a half millions annually. Of course we should: nor should we grudge it so long as the money was being expended on the improvement of the social conditions of a part of the United Kingdom. We do, however, grudge it if it is to be given to what the Prime Minister calls "the Irish Nation." If Ireland wants to be a nation in our despite, let it at least be a nation at its own expense and not at ours. I will take a parallel case. Suppose the county of Northumberland suddenly demanded a Parliament—and, indeed, there was once a kingdom of Northumbria, though there has never been one of Ireland apart from the British Crown—and suppose it found that its own local taxation would not pay for its Old Age Pensions because the additional resources were being supplied by the wealthier communities of London, Liverpool, and Birmingham, the contention would apparently be: "London, Liverpool, and Birmingham ought to go on paying because they did not object to paying before." As long as Northumberland is a part of the union of counties which make up the United Kingdom, no one will inquire into its taxable capacity any more than he will ask whether Wiltshire or Kent can pay for its Old Age Pensions. But if Northumberland is to be allowed to separate let it pay the costs of

separation. If it is richer than its neighbours let it gain: if it is poorer let it lose.[1]

The Irish Nationalists cannot have it both ways: they cannot serve their Nationalist god and pick the pockets of the British Mammon: they cannot combine the romantic delights of separatism with the solid advantages of Union.

But there is, to my mind, another and an even more serious side to the reserved services subsidy. The necessity for the subsidy proves that British social legislation of the last few years has already outstripped the taxable capacity of Ireland. In other words, if the Home Rule Bill of 1893 had been passed, Ireland would not only have been in any case bankrupt but, *a fortiori*, she would have had no Insurance, no Old Age Pensions, no Land Purchase Act; and Mr Birrell himself admitted in the course of the Committee debates on the Bill that "for the moment the completion of land purchase is more important than Home Rule itself." The recent social progress of Ireland is due to Imperial credit and Imperial money. The Union alone has made progress possible for the sister island. But now the Union is to be broken: and when the political bond snaps, the financial tie will break with it. Even the Prime Minister does not venture to suggest that England and Scotland shall continue to finance Irish Social Reform under an Irish Parliament. At a time when all parties at Westminster are turning more and more of their thoughts to the improvement of the

[1] I introduced the illustration of Northumbria as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Home Rule case, little dreaming that Mr Churchill would at Dundee attempt to translate this very *reductio ad absurdum* into a practical policy. After this it is hardly surprising that the Dundee speech should have been regarded by both parties as a deadly blow aimed at the Government Bill.

condition of the people, Ireland is to be thrust out into the wilderness. This point has been illustrated by the report of the Commissioners on Education, half of whom are Catholics and half Protestants. These gentlemen point out that while, quite apart from new departures, the increase in expenditure on Education becomes automatically greater every year, the sum granted to this reserved service is a fixed one. The Education system in Ireland will therefore not only remain unprogressive, but it must inevitably fall into decay unless the Irish Parliament comes to the financial rescue. Of such help the Commissioners have no hope, for poverty and more pressing claims will forbid further assistance. And what is true of Education is true of all other measures of reform. We are asked to inflict a grave injustice on the people of Ireland in order that we may establish an industrial Poland on our flank. The conditions and wages of the two countries, instead of being gradually assimilated as they have been under the last twenty years of Unionist Government, are to be violently separated. The richer country is to advance: the poorer country is to be stereotyped in poverty, and in the long run the effects of this amazing policy will recoil on England with an economic rebound. Our own conditions will be depressed in turn by the competition, whether in goods or labour, of the more reactionary country. Under complete separation we might at least protect ourselves by a tariff: under the Bill we cannot even do that. The two countries are to have a common fiscal policy, but not a common industrial policy—they are to have the same tariff but different Factory Acts and different wages: they are to be neither bond nor free, but to bear the double curses both of bondage and freedom.

Anyone who reads the debate which took place on a Unionist amendment to reserve factory legislation and other cognate subjects to the Imperial Parliament will realise how the temper of the Opposition has been tried by the Home Rule debates. He will see that it is possible for all the arguments to be on one side. He will understand what it means to plead before a court whose decision is already taken. Speech after speech was made by Unionists and remained unanswered. The Nationalists were silent; the only speech of any substance from the Liberal benches was in support of the amendment. Mr Ramsay Macdonald was content, like the Prime Minister, to be a "credulous optimist," and put his trust in an Irish Labour party which does not at present exist. The Solicitor-General, who spoke for the Cabinet, found his "governing" argument in the reflection that if the Irish Parliament could be induced to quarrel about labour legislation it might forget to quarrel about religion. It is with such levity as this that the Government, sitting under the silent ranks of the Nationalists, has dismissed all argument.

So far, I have used arguments which would be equally true and applicable to the Bill if there was not a soul in Ireland who was not both a Roman Catholic and a Nationalist. But every objection to the Bill is intensified ten times by the fact that Ireland is not peopled by a homogeneous race. When the Prime Minister talked about the Irish Nation, a Unionist member asked him pertinently "which Nation" he meant. Tacitus rightly differentiated between the two factors, geographical and moral, which enter into the conception of nationality, when he spoke of peoples being separated "by mountains and fear." The Irish Channel which separates England from Ireland is a

small boundary compared to the gulf which separates men in Ireland who live almost side by side. Potent as is the influence of geography in moulding the destiny and character of nations, it is as nothing to the influence of history, race, and religion, while the consciousness of these factors is to-day kept perpetually alive by the influence of cheap printing and free literature. Ulster then, as even Ministerialists are uneasily aware in their hearts, dominates the whole Home Rule situation. Every pitfall in the Bill will become not only a menace but a reality, because the Irish Parliament will be attempting to govern not one race but two. Every argument used by Home Rulers for giving self-government to one Irish Nation and for freeing it from Imperial control can be used with equal validity to prove that the inhabitants of north-eastern Ulster should be allowed to retain the form of government which pleases and suits them best. No consistent man can say in one breath, "Within the area of the United Kingdom the majority of Irishmen want Home Rule, and, therefore, they must have it," and in the next breath, "Within the area of Ireland the majority in the six districts of Ulster want to remain under the Imperial Parliament, but, nevertheless, they shall not so remain."

That the Liberal Party should take up such an attitude is a curious indication of that perverted tendency which has dominated Liberalism, the intense desire to be the friend of everybody who is your country's enemy. This party might have been created to prove the truth of the cynic's conclusion "that patriotism does not pay." The Ministerialist attitude appears to be that every minority in the Empire shall have what it wants so long as it does not persist in being loyal. For the crime of loyalty

no punishment can be too severe—not even that of being handed over to the mercies of hereditary enemies.

I have said that the provisions of the Home Rule Bill would be unworkable, even if Ireland had no Protestant within her borders. The existence of the loyal minority makes the machinery of the Bill impossible. Let us take the case of the movement of troops to Belfast to enable Mr Churchill to speak there. The step was presumably necessary, or the Executive would not have taken it. But what would be the position under the Home Rule Bill if Mr Redmond was announced to speak at the Ulster Hall and Sir Edward Carson in some Nationalist stronghold in the South? Theoretically the Lord-Lieutenant could move troops to both places: in practice he could only do so with the consent of the Irish Parliament. For if the Lord-Lieutenant took a single step against the advice and wishes of Mr Redmond and his friends, the latter could permanently deprive Ireland of a Parliamentary Government. What then would happen? If the Executive gave way, Mr Redmond would make his speech from behind the shelter of Imperial bayonets while Sir Edward Carson was left to shift for himself. If the Lord-Lieutenant stood firm, he would have to try and govern Ireland by absolutist methods with a fraction of the machinery necessary for absolutism which exists to-day, and with thirty Irish members at Westminster declaiming against this invasion of their sovereignty rights. We shall be back in '85 without the powers the Imperial Government then possessed. We shall have made a chaos and called it Home Rule. It is indeed an ironical commentary on Liberal principles that Ministers propose to inaugurate self-government by coercing Ulster with Imperial bayonets, and to leave for fair treat-

ment and public order only one guarantee—a recourse to an inefficient absolutism from which even the Stuarts would have recoiled. There remains only one way out of the dilemma, and that is to declare that Mr Redmond would not be so wicked or so unfeeling as to oppress the Protestant minority.

Under the Home Rule Bill, Mr Redmond's inclinations, or the inclinations of those behind him, are the things which count. The guarantees are paper, the checks are shams: England will have made a Catholic and Nationalist majority supreme at Dublin, and she will have left herself no real power to protect the loyal minority. Is it to be wondered at that the minority does not like the prospect? Is it strange that Unionists in Great Britain are prepared to go to any lengths rather than see their fellow-citizens subjected to a tyranny no less cruel and deadly because it will be organised under the forms of Parliamentary Government? And what after all are the motives of the Nationalists in insisting on the inclusion of Ulster? Partly, no doubt, a desire to taste once again after years of equality the pleasures of ascendency. But apart from this motive stands the undeniable fact that a Home Rule Ireland without Ulster would be a financial impossibility. In custom duties Belfast contributes to the revenue more than two-thirds the total amount of the Irish customs. It is the old story: everybody is to pay for Home Rule except the people who want it: every interest is to be sacrificed except the interest of Catholic domination.

How, then, are we to fight this intolerable measure? We have discussed it in the House under circumstances which have convinced us of the impotence of debate. To the majority of clauses time only for the most perfunctory discussion has been given, and to

many time for no discussion at all. Clause 2, the most important clause of the Bill, for it contains the list of subjects with which the Irish Parliament shall have no power to deal, was passed after only a sixth part of it had been considered, and only eleven out of one hundred and seventy separate amendments had been debated. On one evening no fewer than six financial clauses were passed without debate. It is a very fair estimate to say that not more than one-sixth of this Bill, which is to set up a new constitution in Ireland, and to modify profoundly the constitution of Great Britain, has been discussed by the House of Commons. The Government has been indifferent to criticism, forgetful of courtesy, deaf to protest, contemptuous of the rights of debate and the customs of the House. It has done its best to break the patience and rouse the anger of the Opposition. It has been reckless of everything but its desire to pass the Bill this session, so that ultimately it may become law before another election. What other means can we take to defeat it? We have still two years during which discussion in the country may perhaps succeed where discussion in the House has failed. And if that fails too, Ulster is prepared to resist the Irish Government first by a refusal to recognise it, and then, if necessary, by force. She stands upon the elementary right of all free men to be governed, except under compulsion of arms, only by those whom they may choose. This is her determination, and the Unionist leaders are pledged to her support. The pledge has not been lightly given, and if the time and need should come it will be fulfilled. On the plains of Ulster there lives a race, hard and dour if you like, but impassioned and determined; not to be moved by oratory and not to be cowed by arms. And behind this power is drawn up rank behind rank

the whole force of British Unionism, determined that at any cost this betrayal of their friends and country shall never deface the Statute Book. "Vote it as you please. There is a company of poor men that will spend all their blood before they see it settled so."

The temperament of Liberalism has struck an obstacle of the strength of which it had no conception. For long it continued blind. Then only with reluctance did it see, and it used every endeavour of indifference, ridicule, and misrepresentation against the determination of Ulster. But now as the implacable character of Ulster's resistance has begun to penetrate the Liberal mind, the chorus of derision with which the earlier statement of intention made by the North was greeted in the Ministerial press has sunk to a few rather tremulous voices. Mr Churchill, indeed, proved the chosen instrument for effecting the change. His unlucky attempt to hold a meeting in the Ulster Hall was the first proof of Protestant determination which struck home to the English and Scotch imagination, and he seems to have returned from his visit imbued with a sense of the gravity of the situation. When the Blenheim declaration and its endorsement in the House of Commons showed beyond all doubt that the whole Unionist Party meant to stand by Ulster, his alarm found vent in some remarkable public letters breathing alternately the spirit of menace and cajolery. The Unionist leaders were exhorted to abandon the North to its fate in the interests of constitutional moderation and propriety! The appeal reminds us of Lord Salisbury's famous essay on Lord John Russell's Foreign policy: "Fresh from the bombardment of Viagosima he extols the virtues of Christian moderation." Why should we

be moderate with Mr Churchill and his friends? We have seen in the period during which Ministers still possessed some power to hurt, our principles and our country subjected to every humiliation and outrage which the mind of political partisanship could conceive. We have seen an ancient constitution dismembered, an illustrious monarchy dragged in the dust, Parliamentary and executive power prostituted to the pursuit of political class vendettas, and the resources of chicanery exhausted to give Ministers sufficient years of office to pass this Bill behind the backs of the people. And then Mr Churchill talks to us of the risk of upsetting the boat "by struggling for the tiller"! Mr Churchill and his friends should have thought of all this before they determined to buy office from Mr Redmond at the price of the constitution.

Failing, however, the readiness of the Opposition leaders to oblige with a display of those Christian virtues with which the present Cabinet has been so plentifully endowed, they were to make acquaintance with a felon's cell or to march *en masse* to Tower Hill to an execution which would no doubt be conducted in a true spirit of Constitutional harmony. I do not know whether the writer intended to be taken seriously, but if the political methods of the seventeenth century are to be invoked by the party of progress, that party and its leaders may be reminded that Ministers too have, in other days, been impeached.

To these lengthy letters, Mr Bonar Law made brief reply. The position of the Unionist Party was precisely as stated at Blenheim and in the House of Commons: if the Government chose to try and coerce Ulster, on their heads would rest the blame for civil war. At this, the First Lord of the Admiralty

seems to have made up his mind that the party had better save what they could and leave the Home Rule ship before she struck the reef and took all hands down with her. The Dundee speech with its litter of subordinate Parliaments conceded the greater part of the Unionist contention and struck consternation into the Coalition ranks. It was promptly and universally repudiated; but the white flag had been exposed, and voice after voice has now been raised on the Liberal side, pleading for a Referendum or a General Election before the Bill passed, for a full discussion in the Commons, or for some kind of compromise with the Protestant North. Mr Redmond, however, is inexorable, and the Prime Minister's answer to the Covenant and to the Liverpool and Glasgow demonstrations is to declare in Fife that he meant to hold on to the bitter end. So be it; but no one can say after the signing of the Covenant that Ministers have not been warned.

The Belfast and Liverpool demonstrations were indeed the most remarkable that I have ever witnessed. They transcended ordinary political meetings, because behind them loomed the possibility of something sterner than politics. But they have been already too well and too recently described for me to attempt the task. Amongst the shouting of those vast multitudes both Liberal and Unionist observers

> "have heard afar
> ancestral voices prophesying war."

The question of the moral validity of resistance to constituted authority has been made the text for many sermons preached by our political opponents of late. These allocutions do not come with any particular grace from their authors. The Liberal Party claims

descent from the Whigs, however few individual Whigs it still retains. Is it claimed that Pym and Hampden were wrong in lifting up their hands against the Lord's annointed, or that the present Cabinet would have sent the authors of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to Tower Hill? Or, to come to more recent times, was Mr Chamberlain wrong in threatening to march 100,000 men from Birmingham to London when the Reform Bill of 1884 was in jeopardy, and was Mr Gladstone culpable in supporting that threat? "I am sorry to say," said Mr Gladstone, "that if no instructions had ever been addressed in political crises to the people of this country, except to remember to hate violence and love order and exercise patience, the liberty of this country would never have been attained." At a still more recent date was Mr Lloyd George wrong when he organised a national movement in Wales to resist the provisions of the Education Act of 1902? Again, to take the argument a stage further, is everybody who has written or spoken in extenuation of any of these movements a traitor who should be visited with the severest penalties of the law? It is sufficient to state these questions to show that our opponents least of all have the right to represent themselves as the unbending advocates of passive obedience under all circumstances.

The truth of the matter is, that in these historic instances judgment must depend on the circumstances of the particular case, and it is in this spirit that historians of all schools of thought have pronounced upon those great popular or dynastic movements which have so often changed the complexion of political affairs in this country. Much must depend upon the nature of the grievance and on the volume of support which lies behind it: much also must depend

on the character of the authority which claims to exercise the repressive powers of the law. Indeed, it is on this class of fact that the issue itself, not less than the judgment on it, depends. Movements against which no Government can stand do not organise themselves without due cause; nor need any authority which has real justification, and the confidence of the country behind it, fear that the great bulk of the inhabitants of these islands would withhold support from the maintenance of law and order. The trouble of the Coalition and the Cabinet is that, like the administration of James II., it can stand neither of these tests, and will therefore, like that monarch, prefer abdication to battle. The justice of the Ulster claim is too manifest, the strength of the Ulster movement is too great, and popular sympathy with it here too general, to allow a British army to march on Belfast to subvert the ancient liberties of fellow citizens. But this much I will say, that if the attempt were made it would fail, for the same reasons which defeated the resistance to William III.—the lack of moral authority on the part of the Government, and of popular support on the part of the people. If the men of Ulster are wrong, the authors of the glorious Revolution were wrong also; but if the Whigs were right, then Ulster is justified by their example. If Ministers desire to shoot Loyalists let them at least ask the electorate whether it will give them permission to do so. If they shoot first, and ask leave afterwards, the blood of the slain will cry out from the dust, and a vengeance will be taken upon them unexampled in modern political history. Their high places will know them no more in this generation. Let them pause and reflect, before it be too late, whether Constitutional government is not better than the single-

chamber despotism of a Cabinet, temporary defeat than political annihilation, and even popular disapproval of policies honestly held, than the vengeance which waits for those who try and carry, by dishonest and violent means, schemes which the nation loathes. The choice between peace or war is in their hands, not in ours, and on their shoulders must the consequences rest.

VI

THE POSITION OF ULSTER[1]

I AM here, at your request, to address you on the day which you and your forefathers have been long accustomed to celebrate as the anniversary of the most critical and glorious battle in your history. Two centuries and a quarter ago an Irish Parliament sitting at Dublin menaced the liberty of your ancestors, confiscated their property, and proscribed their lives. For twelve months they were left by England, a small but stubborn minority, to work out their own salvation, and offer what resistance their resources afforded to the designs of their hereditary enemies. Their country was laid waste; their cattle were destroyed; their families were brutally massacred; no act of oppression or of brutality was omitted which could try the patience, or excite the resentment, of a high-spirited race. The twelve months which witnessed the siege of Enniskillen, and the investment of Londonderry, the battle of Newtown Butler, and the engagement of the Boyne, taught the world that the Protestants of Ulster were men who confronted death with tranquillity in the twin causes of liberty and religion. That heroic struggle bequeathed to the history of Ireland many memories which will never be forgotten, of Tyrconnel, the

[1] A speech delivered in Belfast on July 12, 1912.

intriguer; of Lundy, the traitor; of Walker, who breathed his own spiritual courage into the hearts of dying men; and, finally, of William, the King, tireless in exertion, indomitable of purpose, whose immortal triumph we commemorate to-day.

History affords great memories to great nations, and you do well to look to your past alike for inspiration and for hope. Never in the history of Ulster has your annual celebration been more opportune. Never has it been more necessary to recall the lessons of past years than in the crisis which confronts the descendants of those who perished from famine and disease behind the ramparts of Londonderry, or who rendered up their lives in conquering the fords of the Boyne. Those who went before you bequeathed these lessons above all others, that it is the cause that counts and not the consequences; that brave men look at all times to their own resolution, but most of all when faced by perils in which they can descry no immediate hope. Your position is indeed to-day less desperate than that of your ancestors seemed; but it is none the less one which demands the same qualities of gravity, resolution, and self-reliance as they exhibited upon so large a stage.

Let us shortly recall the position in which you find yourselves. You compose a section of the community of which even your opponents have never denied that it is contented, prosperous, law-abiding, and loyal. You have, it is true, avoided the method of calling attention to your grievances which for generations has distinguished your political opponents: you have maimed no dumb animal; you have shot no woman; you have stabbed no Sunday-school child. Your claims, therefore, upon the present Government are obviously small in comparison with those of the men who dictate Mr

Asquith's policy. And yet, as compared with them, you ask very little. You only ask to be allowed to sit, as heretofore, in a Parliament which, amid all the vicissitudes of party politics, has not failed to retain your confidence. You only ask that you may be permitted still to enjoy the same rights, and still be bound by the same obligations, which are possessed and discharged by every citizen of these islands. A foreigner, ignorant of the inner secrets of our domestic politics, would not and could not believe that any great nation would close its ears to an appeal couched in such language and proceeding from such citizens. Powerful sovereigns have in the past waged bloody wars for the retention of old provinces, or for the conquest of new territory. But history records no instance of a State which has drawn the sword to extrude from its polity, a loyal, an industrious, and a wealthy population. Home Rule, in fact, considered in relation to its present sponsors, is the most brazen paradox of modern politics.

What is the explanation of that paradox? It is eloquent in its simple infamy. The Irish Nationalist Party controls eighty votes in the House of Commons. Whenever in the last twenty-five years the Liberal Party has required those votes as the condition of office it has supported Home Rule; whenever it has been strong enough to retain office without those votes it has repudiated Home Rule. The whole history of Mr Asquith proves that he cares nothing now, and never has cared, on their merits for the proposals which would, as you are satisfied, consummate your ruin. He agreed with Mr Gladstone when Mr Gladstone denounced Home Rule; he agreed with Mr Gladstone when Mr Gladstone adopted Home Rule; he agreed with Lord Rosebery when Lord Rosebery repudiated

Home Rule; and he repudiated Lord Rosebery when he himself in his turn required the eighty votes which had tempted the ambition, and seduced the conscience, of Mr Gladstone. From first to last you in Ulster have been the pawns in a game played by others; your case has never been considered on its own merits; you are the cheap coinage with which Mr Asquith pays Mr Redmond for services rendered. The Government were defeated in the Budget Election. If the representatives of Ireland had given an honest vote upon proposals admitted by themselves to be disastrous to your country, Mr Asquith and his associates would have perished in the Debate on the Address. The Prime Minister thereupon made a bargain, shameful in its profligacy, with your Nationalist opponents. He undertook that if the Nationalist Party would give him the appearance of victory at the polls by voting for the Budget, he on his part would pay them, price for price, by cheating the constituencies of their right to decide Home Rule.

The Budget filled one balance of the scale; Ulster was flung into the other. But even a bargain so complete in its abandonment failed to supply the conspirators with absolute security. The House of Lords still remained, able, in the last resort, to appeal to those constituencies which on two previous occasions had destroyed two previous Home Rule Bills. It became, therefore, necessary, to complete their machinations, that the House of Lords should be destroyed firstly by a campaign of class-hatred in the constituencies unexampled in a Christian country, and of which we are still reaping the industrial fruits; and secondly, by an outrage of incredible vileness upon the Royal Prerogative. They succeeded for the moment in effecting their purpose; and the same men invite Ulster now, over the

ruins of an ancient Constitution, to consent in despair to the terms of their own destruction. Such are the facts. The position would be more tolerable if they were openly avowed, but the last element of exasperation, to a nation tired of trickery, is supplied by the hypocrisy with which the true motive is concealed. We are told of the convictions of the Government and, Heaven help us! of their principles; we are told of their belief in the reconciling influence of time; we are invited to believe that the Nationalists are telling the truth to-day, although that belief involves the conclusion that they have been lying for twenty years.

I believe that you in Ulster are as weary as I am of the sham, and the folly, and the unreality, of our present Parliamentary discussions. We have spent days, and we shall spend weeks, in discussing with the most minute detail a Bill which you know, and I know, and Mr Asquith knows, will never become operative in Ulster. But our discussions have been varied by at least one vital debate. We discussed for three days whether Ulster should be included in, or excluded from the new constitution. On the part of the Government the discussion was a trap. They professed that if Ulster formally demanded exclusion as the condition of a treaty of peace, such a demand would deserve and receive the consideration of the Government. Yes, but consideration was all that they had to give; consent was out of their power: for Mr Redmond had openly avowed that he would never accept a measure of Home Rule from the ambit of which the Northern Provinces were excluded. What indeed has Home Rule to offer to him and his friends with no one to tax and no one to persecute? Even this debate, therefore, lacked reality and honesty, for here, too, the tactical explanation was appar-

ent. The Government hoped that Ulster would decline the amendment, in order that the Coalition might protest to the constituencies: "We offered Ulster exclusion, and Ulster refused exclusion: where is the grievance of Ulster? where her justification for armed revolt?" This plot was frustrated by the vigilance of your leaders, and the Government now openly boast that Ulster, either willingly or unwillingly, shall send representatives to, and be governed by, a Home Rule Parliament. Mr Churchill, indeed, and Sir Edward Grey, have indicated rather than explained a vague alternative policy. They hinted of new schemes which might become necessary if Ulster persisted in her opposition. Yet so contemptuously did both these Ministers treat Ulster that neither of them thought it worth while to come to the House of Commons to explain his utterances on any one of the three days on which this issue was debated.

It is convenient, before we anticipate the ultimate situation, to answer shortly a question which is continually asked. You are asked why you distrust the Nationalist Members, and why you are so certain that the establishment of a Home Rule Parliament would be disastrous both to Ulster and the Empire. You answer, that it is because you know these men; it is because you have studied their history; it is because you choose rather to believe them over a sustained period, where they had every inducement to speak the truth, than over a limited period in which they had every inducement to deceive; it is because you know that the spirit of ascendency, of sacerdotalism, and of persecution, is as active and virulent in their ranks as it was active and virulent when your forefathers met and drove theirs in rout at the Battle of the Boyne; it is because you know that they are in their

hearts inexorably committed to the policy of complete separation from England. You do not desire, and you do not intend, to take part under such auspices and with such rulers in an interregnum of limited self-government, which is only valued because it will prepare the way for a final severance. Nor are we impressed when we hear English Liberals inviting us to reflect upon the influence of conciliation, or the prospect that responsibility will eradicate the inherited passions of so many centuries. To them you make three answers. You tell them first that you live in this country and that they do not. You tell them, further, that you will suffer, not they, you and your wives and children, if you are right and they are wrong; and you tell them finally, that they and their reassurances are suspect, for they proceed from men who have made themselves partners in the guilty conspiracy of which I have already traced the history. Let the supporters of Welsh Disestablishment recommend their cause, and exhibit their zeal, by personal and not by vicarious sacrifices. Let the Labour Party carry the Osborne Judgment Bill (if they can) upon its merits, and not by throwing in Ulster as a makeweight. For myself, I have no doubt either of the sincerity or of the conclusiveness of this reply. If I were an Ulster Protestant I would rather be ruled from Constantinople, by the Sultan of Turkey, than by a politician like Mr Devlin, who, if he were as effective as he is defamatory, or as resourceful as he is malignant, would be a considerable demagogue. Hatred of Ulster breathes in every one of his speeches, a hatred which explains, if it does not excuse, the scandalous inventions with which he recently slandered Mr Clark, a Belfast citizen, who has brought as much honour to Belfast as Mr Devlin has brought malice. The inclusion in an Irish Executive of such a

man would be a sufficient exposure of its spirit, its character, and its motives.

What, then, is the policy of Ulster? You have reiterated twice and thrice your solemn warning, that under no circumstances, and under the stress of no combination, will you submit to Home Rule. The Prime Minister is to speak next week in Dublin. I challenge him on behalf of the Unionist Party to declare, if he can and if he knows it, the policy with which the Government will meet your resistance. Let him, however, devote himself to the only assumption which has any correspondence with the facts — the assumption, namely, that you will never submit. We do not desire to be wearied once again with those familiar and sonorous eulogies of the quality of conciliation; still less do we desire the old recital of worthless paper safeguards. We ask a simple question—With what policy is the Government prepared to meet the contingency that Ulster will in fact do what every competent observer knows that Ulster will do? I do not think he will give an answer. I think he will drift, and still drift, till the rapids are reached, till the wrong, and it may be the tragedy, are consummated. Your course, at any rate, is clear, and it becomes you from now henceforth to prepare silently, steadfastly, and constantly for the gravest crisis which has tested the men of your race for more than two centuries.

Above all, I would most earnestly press upon every man who listens to me the vital necessity of maintaining that impression of self-restraint and reserve force which has already so powerfully and so favourably influenced opinion in the English constituencies. Let there be no premature or isolated appeal to force. It is true that you have been provoked by a foul and ferocious attack upon children. But you will not let

it be truly said that you have retaliated upon Roman Catholic citizens of Belfast, inferior to yourselves in numbers and in organisation. You will not lose; you will gain immeasurably by the exhibition of a composure which is in harmony with the example of your forefathers and your own former practice. And when the hour comes, as it has come to others, when you are called upon to put everything you hold dear to the hazard, you will go forward to face that future, which the inscrutable purpose of the Almighty has in store for you, with the quiet confidence of men who have patiently endured, until endurance became treason to their race.

You are sometimes asked whether you propose to resist the English Army. I reply that even if this Government had the wickedness (which I do not doubt) it is wholly lacking in the nerve required to give an order, which in my deliberate judgment would shatter for years the civilisation of these islands. An Army which the Nationalist Party has bespattered with coarse and cowardly insults, and whose flag it has outraged, will not be ordered by this or any other Government to fire upon a loyal community which rejoices in the records of their valour and does homage to the colours under which so much glory has been won. If then, as I confidently predict to you, the Army cannot be ordered to drive you from the Empire, the prospect is that you will be cast out from Parliament by the decision of a Parliament which is everywhere repudiated by the constituencies. It may be within their competence (however mad and wicked the act) so to cast you out, but when that is done their right is at least exhausted: they have no claim, either legal or moral, to determine the Government under which you shall live, or to prescribe the masters of your new fortunes. It will then

be for the moonlighters and the cattle-maimers to conquer Ulster themselves, and it will be for you to show whether you are worse men or your enemies better men than the forefathers of you both. But I note with satisfaction that you are preparing yourselves by the practice of exercises, and the submission to discipline, for the struggle which is not unlikely to test your determination. The Nationalists are determined to rule you. You are determined that you will never be ruled by them. A collision of wills so sharp may well defy the resources of a peaceful solution. Should these fail, you will, in my judgment, be entitled to forget the community which has driven you forth, and to combine in opposition to the community which claims your allegiance as the fruit of a corrupt and abominable bargain. You will have regained the free discretion of free men. And, I say here, speaking as I believe under our present representative system on behalf of the majority of the English constituencies, that in that dark hour of your trial, should it unhappily come, you will not lack the active support of thousands in England who realise that your liberties are being subverted by revolutionary means, and that those who acquiesce in the consequences of revolution to others will in their turn become the victims of revolution.

I do not underrate the gravity of this statement; still less do I underrate the responsibility which I undertake in making it. I and my friends have considered the situation deeply. I know not whether agreement would be complete among us upon the rights and duties of Ulster, had a specific appeal been made to the constituencies, under circumstances really enabling them to pronounce upon this Bill. But on this we are all of us agreed, that the crisis has called into existence one of those supreme issues of conscience amid which the

ordinary landmarks of permissible resistance to technical law are submerged. We shall not shrink from the consequences of this view, not though the whole fabric of the Commonwealth be convulsed, and we shall tread with you the path of your destiny knowing that, whether it leads to freedom or to disaster, it is the only road which does not lead to dishonour.

VII

CONSERVATISM AND THE PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNMENT

The General Election of 1906 defeated a Conservative Government, but began a revival of Conservatism. It is a commonplace of the history of ideas that principles which men take for granted and habitually practice in everyday life easily slip out of conscious recognition, and may only regain it when a revolution comes to challenge habit and to force men to re-think the theoretical basis of their conduct. Knowledge, too, is largely a consciousness of differences. Twenty years of a nearly continuous Conservative domination did much prior to 1906 to obliterate from the public mind what a Radical politician was really like, and thereby also to obscure the distinctive features of Conservatism. We have now for some years had a Radical Government in power, and the result undoubtedly is to give many people a much clearer idea than they had before why they are not Radicals and why they are Conservatives. There are, moreover, special reasons why the Conservative *débâcle* of 1906 has had a more than usually illuminating effect in this direction, and therefore in the following pages I propose to draw freely from the record of the most recent years to illustrate and prove some very old principles of politics.

First and foremost, people are beginning to recollect how distinct and essential a thing is the art of government. The Socialist and Labour politician may imagine that the whole art of government is simply the science of economics, and that when the laws of supply and demand have been sufficiently investigated the sole function of a Government will be to keep a schedule of prices and wages, life itself being regulated by a series of sliding scales; a modern Chancellor of the Exchequer may regard the real work of the Treasury, the greatest and most technical of all government departments, as being merely the management of political audiences; a coalition Cabinet may easily confuse governing with continuance in office; academic and visionary minds tend to assume that the art is complete when a sufficient number of high ideals and progressive theories have been put into words. But the true art of government is much more than any of these things. National defence; law, justice, police; the regulation of trade as it is and not merely as it ought to be; the tremendous issues of business and life which are involved in national finance; the civil service, and its preservation from corruption and inefficiency; religion, art, and public morals; the freedom of thought and speech of individual citizens; parliamentary institutions; all these things are the subject matter of the art of government. The practice of the art calls for the exercise in some or other member of the body politic of every quality that belongs to the art of the practical management of men and affairs in the private concerns of life; but as in political government the men concerned are more numerous, being the whole nation, and the affairs are greater, so the requisite qualities are more indispensable. As, moreover, the government of men in multitudes is more complicated than the government of men singly,

and needs a mechanism of government which itself creates fresh complications, so the rules and traditions drawn from the past experience of governments need to be more carefully observed and more deeply pondered than the rules and traditions of the simpler and more direct problems of private life. Of one thing it is needful to be sure: the art of government is not an easy thing; it is a splendid art, promising to its successful professors great achievements and great rewards, but it is also a grave and difficult art, easily capable of perversion to base uses, and when so perverted fruitful of odious and demoralising results.

Democracy is an attempt to weld civil society into a whole. Unity, harmony, co-operation—these are the characteristic ideals of free government; faction, class war, disorder, στάσις—these are its characteristic vices. The autocracy of Napoleon, in logic, was a strange child of the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which had so lately destroyed the most venerable absolutism in Europe; in fact, it was quite naturally born of the cohabitation of democracy and faction. It was necessary to crush freedom in order that a nation, no longer stifled by the war of party, might breathe the air and live. The Napoleonic era, in its origin at least, was the re-making of a nation, and the ideal upon which Napoleon fixed his eyes was that of a people at peace within itself; France did not submit to a dictatorship through being blinded by the glamour of military success, but through disgust at the civil war of rival adventurers or rival ideologues. To promote harmony among classes is the first duty of a democratic statesman. In a harmonious state great reforms can most easily be accomplished, privileges can be surrendered without bitterness, and experiments made with the least risk of disaster.

Ten years ago, such observations and historical parallels might have been treated as irrelevant platitudes. To-day I venture to think they have a practical bearing and reality. My present purpose, therefore, is to examine the recent policy of the present Administration, to test it in the light of the true principles of the art of government, and to inquire what lessons the test affords for the guidance of Conservatism in the choice of its own policy in opposition or in office.

Four policies of first-rate importance have been put into force since the change of Government in 1905, in respect of the several matters of Temperance, Finance, Education, and Parliamentary Government. Each of these policies has been marked by the same spirit of class warfare and faction which, so long as it controls Radicalism, will always provide Conservatives with good reasons for being Conservatives. And to-day we are threatened with a fifth and a sixth by which violent civil dissensions are to be provoked in Ireland, and an attempt is to be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to inoculate the country districts with some new variant of the Gospel of Limehouse.

No one has ever supposed that a handful of temperance reformers, however earnest, could have furnished the influence needed to force a contentious Licensing Bill into the King's Speech and through the House of Commons, as was done in 1908. The real driving power which made that ill-fated measure so prominent in the official programme of the Liberal Party was the determination of the forces of faction to chastise a great trade, the members of which voted against the Liberal Party and supported its opponents. The phrases used in that conflict were of the customary Liberal character: the liquor trade was a criminal organisation;

it battened on the degradation of the people; every public-house was a Conservative committee-room; the nation must master the trade, or the trade would master the nation. Such phrases, scattered with variations from hundreds of platforms in the picturesque atmosphere of political conflict, leave no doubt in the minds of all who look back, upon the true nature of the principle of government at the base of the policy so advocated. It was not the principle of a united nation; it was the true principle of faction—one part of the nation prostituting the control of government against another part. The recent practice of Radicalism has indeed reversed the imaginary Irishman's saying, and requires that a Government must always be against some one.

Temperance reform, after all, is a serious and delicate problem of practical statesmanship. The national evil of intemperance is great, but the difficulties of imposing virtue and suppressing vice by Act of Parliament are also great. It would have been easy for the Government to have approached the problem in a national spirit, seeking no enemy to injure, but appealing to all, in a moderate sense, to help its solution. If what to many of us seemed a false view of the mischief dictated a plan of reform requiring great sacrifices of the brewing industry, those sacrifices might have been asked as sacrifices on behalf of national needs, and not exacted as penalties from a detected criminal, or as spoils of war from a defeated enemy.

That principles of factious hostility have advantages for the immediate and practical purpose of maintaining oneself in office may no doubt be conceded. Nothing inspires a political party so much for a short time as the idea that it is being led against the enemy. It was, therefore, from one point of view, a stroke of genius to appeal direct to party spirit as a means of

forcing upon the country an otherwise unpopular licensing reform. The Liberal caucus impressed upon its followers the idea that the Bill was a fight *against* some one—the enemy of their party ; by an adroit confusion of the two capacities in which every politician is bound to act—the public capacity of the politician as such, in which he is a fair target for the arrows of party warfare, and the private capacity in which, as trader, property-owner, or professional man, his interests should be the impartial concern of all parties—Mr Lloyd George and his friends were able to appeal to all the loyalty and enthusiasm of their followers, as a party, to join in the hue and cry after the men who, as traders, brewed ale, and, as citizens, voted Tory. That these tactics ultimately failed, and failed disastrously, so far as licensing was concerned, is a fact upon which I shall make a few comments later. For the present my object is to demonstrate the essential particulars in which recent Radical policy has sinned, and continues to sin, against the first principles of the art of government.

As a matter of history, I suspect that the earlier attempt of the Ministry to legislate on education was the first step on the downward course. There is no space here to contrast at length the educational views expressed by the leaders of the Liberal Party, before and upon their assumption of office in 1905, with the Bill which political exigencies forced them to introduce, when they met Parliament a few months later. The views for the most part were moderate, and pointed naturally to a solution of the religious controversy which, while not satisfying extremists, would still have passed the House of Lords and so have obviated the first of the disputes between the two Houses. The appointment, in particular, of a moderate and cultivated Nonconformist in the person of Mr Birrell to the

Education Office, with a recent record of public declarations on education policy wholly at variance with the views of his extremist allies,[1] augured well for the prospects of an educational settlement. But it was not to be. The new tacticians of the Cabinet, we may be sure, pressed the moderate section with some practical questions. Did they realise the temper of the party? Did they wish to rely upon their foes or their friends? Did they think that a Bill recognising the equality of all denominations stood the faintest chance from a majority fresh from the polls and pledged to give a preference to political Nonconformity? That Mr Birrell and his allies in the Cabinet made no satisfactory answer to these questions is shown both by the Bill which that reluctant politician finally recommended to the House of Commons, and by the fact that Mr Lloyd George was permitted in his speech on the second reading to quote Gambetta's famous phrase—Clericalism is the enemy. So the game began; henceforth each Liberal Bill was to be a blow at some one, and legislation became a sort of political witch finding, of which apparently the end is not yet. The Church and her schools in the present case were held up to the odium of Radicals; the squire and parson were represented as lurking in the last refuges of feudalism, the Church schools, which must be torn down and destroyed before the villages of England could be made really Radical; the united enthusiasm of the Radical Party was called upon to use educational legislation as a weapon to attack their political opponents and reward their political friends.

Both of these efforts of faction failed. The Govern-

[1] I refer in particular to Mr Birrell's article in the *Independent Review* for October 1903, in which the principle of "parent's rights" was emphatically advocated.

ment made a mistake in the choice of the enemy. The brewing trade and the Denominational schools alike were found to possess too much popular support, and to be too well organised, to be incapable of effective defence. But the Liberal Party learnt very little statesmanship from its failure. Rather, like the Jacobins, their leaders complained that the revolution had not gone far enough, though, unlike the Jacobins, they cast about with some adroitness for a better outlet for the onrush of the stream. I have traced elsewhere[1] the reversal of Liberal policy in the critical months after the failure of the Licensing Bill of 1908. In the immediate connection the importance of the change lay in the more skilful judgment shown in the choice of the enemy to be attacked. It was necessary to find some class unorganised and possessing no great measure of general popularity, at any rate in those districts where most votes are to be found. It was equally necessary to call some forces, wider in their range than the narrow section of temperance reformers or political Nonconformists, to aid the regular army of partisan Liberalism. The required enemy was found in the landlords; the required support in the advanced social reformer and his allied hosts, consisting in the main of the predatory classes and the submerged part of the population.

In the Budget campaign of 1909 the essential feature of Liberal policy which I am describing reached its full development. The weapon itself, which Liberalism wielded in the war of classes, was simpler and more swiftly grasped by the people than previous ones; to mulct a foe in damages is one of the earliest instincts of civilised man, and therefore the taxation of political opponents required no elaborate explanation. The chief exponents of the measure supplied by their

[1] *Outlook*, May 27, 1911.

rhetoric the broad colour effects needed to make the cold print of the Bill visible from the farthest point of the political horizon. When Mr Lloyd George had described at Limehouse the Duke of Westminster as a blackmailer, and at Cardiff the Marquess of Bute as a robber, and had appealed to all tradesmen, from large milliners to small tailors, to drag from the coffers of their landlords the ill-gotten gains they contained, there could be little doubt how the Budget campaign would develop among the rank and file of the party. Those of us who fought the issue in the country soon found that the platform and pamphlet cries against us had small sound of finance about them, and were the mere reverberating echoes of Mr Lloyd George's denunciation of rich landlords.

The final stage in the progress of the new tacticians was disclosed in the constitutional policy of the Government. That an ancient and a partial institution like the House of Lords was fair game for political vendetta I should be the last to deny, and a vigorous campaign directed to its reconstitution on a basis more conformable to advanced democratic theories would have been intelligible. But the actual campaign was not constitutional discussion. It degenerated into the hunting of a quarry. Individual peers were vilified for purely personal reasons; the policy of the House of Lords in its actual operation was little analysed or discussed; the idea put before the country was rather that of a body of rich and privileged persons to be struck at as an enemy. The purely factious side of the issue was, indeed, everywhere obtruded, and every line of the appeals made by Liberal leaders to their followers was frankly based upon the political necessities of the Liberal Party and its duty to destroy an institution which interfered with the victorious progress of the party.

These four examples of the perversion of party government may do something to recall to the national mind one of the elementary principles of the art of government, and so good may yet come out of evil. Even if it be found that the effect of the examples so set in high places is to debauch the public taste, it remains for the Conservative Party to keep its own honour unsullied, and stand firm for the old tradition. Sooner or later, that tradition is bound to come by its own. It is our task to preach to the people in and out of season the absolute need of internal unity; to establish, as has been pointed out at greater length in the Essay on Social Reform, that social and economic reform can only come as an effort of the nation on behalf of itself, and not as a blow dealt by one part of the nation against another; to refuse resolutely to profit in our turn by retaliatory measures, for which, after all, politics seldom fail to provide sufficient occasion. We may very likely have to ask people for sacrifices, but we shall do so on the old principle of taxation that a man's property rightfully belongs to him, and that he pays taxes out of it to the State on national grounds; we shall not tell property-owners that their property is stolen goods, and that anything we leave them after the tax is paid is a generous concession to them; we shall not seek to stimulate our party hosts by a cry which calls them to menace the private interests of their political opponents, as though to do so were a mere incident of the ordinary function of recording a vote for the party at the polling booth.

Another function which Conservatives are urgently required to undertake is the defence of the institutions of the country. There is, perhaps, no aspect of Conservatism which so faded from conscious recognition during the years of Conservative rule as that ancient principle that

national institutions should be used and not abused, should be respected and not despised, should be altered only for good cause and as a natural development of the past. Nobody thought about what everyone was then doing. The advent of Radicalism to power has stirred the spirit of old controversies, and roused us all to realise the constitutional mischief of which factious irresponsibility can be capable. The Parliament Bill itself, though very conspicuous, is not more significant than some other instances of the attack on national institutions. Perhaps the most illuminating of all is the treatment by the Liberal Party of the local authorities. One would have thought that our system of local government, based, as it is, upon very modern democratic theory, and bound up with a great part of fairly recent Liberal policy, would have been regarded as more or less sacrosanct by even the most advanced Liberals. Indeed, in the platform campaign which followed the Education Act of 1902 and in the discussions of the Education Bill of 1906, the inviolability of a local authority was enthroned by Liberals on a serene height far above the claims of practical politics. From those days, when Parliament was told that it must not say "shall" to a local authority, to the present policy of "gingering" local authorities through the coercive discretionary powers of bureaucratic central departments is the farthest of far cries. Nothing, in fact, is more remarkable than the complete reversal of the attitude which before and after 1902 sought to shield local authorities from all kind of central interference, which denounced the abolition of school boards as an outrage upon local liberties, and organised a revolt against the law by local authorities in Wales in obedience to a perverted theory of the British Constitution.

The explanation, indeed, is simple. These impeccable

municipalities were suddenly found wanting as allies of Liberal legislation. In particular, some hasty and rather ill-considered land legislation, having the laudable object of increasing the number of people living on the land, was thrust upon the local authorities, and their honest exercise of judgment and discretion in its administration was received by Liberals with ill-disguised resentment. There has followed a policy bristling with inquiries, mandamus, and all the other obsolete apparatus of departmental coercion. With the contradiction of earlier principles involved it is unnecessary here to deal; the phenomenon which Conservatives should note and by which they should be warned is the factious irresponsibility which assails a popular system of local government directly it conflicts with party policy.

A similar illustration and warning is discernible in the recent treatment of the House of Commons. In eleven years of office Mr Balfour imposed a "guillotine" closure on three Bills, and on each occasion he was denounced with special warmth by the Liberal Opposition, which pledged itself, on its assumption of office, to restore to the House the liberties of debate, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman stating that the "guillotine" reduced discussion to a farce. Yet in the first three years of the Liberal Cabinet of 1905 eleven Bills were closured by guillotine, while the treatment meted out to the Insurance Bill in its Committee stages became such a public scandal that it has gone far to discredit the whole measure. Here again I do not wish to dwell on the mere inconsistency between pledge and performance; what finally matters is the fact that as soon as the traditional rights of the national institution, however fully admitted by Liberals, became inconvenient to Liberal Party policy, those rights were ruthlessly set aside: "WE must get our Bills through": "*the party* demands

that this Bill should be through the Commons by August"; "Mr Redmond insists that the Insurance Bill should be through by Christmas"—and so forth: the conversations of the tacticians among themselves require no lively imagination.

Of the supreme instance of the Parliament Bill itself I need say little, as the facts are both fresh and clear, and I have already referred to them. "What the party wants" is the only name for the drama. Mr Arnold Bennett might use the subject to repeat the success of his play, "What the Public Wants." The wholly non-moral newspaper proprietor who, with a pretence of public spirit and moral principle, unblushingly seeks the meanest commercial profits, makes a good dramatic parallel to a politician who jerrymanders a constitution for a temporary party object. For any inquiry as to what solution of the constitutional crisis would produce the best constitution for the country, the speeches of ministers may be searched in vain; even Sir Edward Grey, the "patriot" of the party, vehemently contending for the maintenance of a second chamber, found his strongest argument in the plea that a single chamber policy spells death and damnation *for the Liberal Party*; whether it spells salvation or damnation *for the country* is a problem which Sir Edward Grey and his party have not troubled to explore. Yet the institution so dealt with is the oldest legislative assembly in the world, bound up with the great events of English history, for centuries honoured and trusted by the nation, and even to-day, in this bitter controversy, supported by at least half of it.

These instances of disrespect for national institutions are so obvious, when the facts are realised, and so utterly out of harmony with Conservative tradition,

that there is very little need to dwell upon the bearing they have upon Conservative policy. The party has shown, by its own dealing with the House of Lords question, that it is capable of proposals at once conciliatory and impartial. No one can suggest that the drastic reforms of Lord Lansdowne's Bill, whatever their merits or demerits, were conceived in any narrow spirit of party tactics. Indeed, the whole proposals of the Unionist Party, which, though in Opposition, was forced by the peculiarity of the political situation to put forward positive plans as a substitute for those of the Government, were couched in the true spirit of Conservatism —respect for the past, a desire to retain all that is best in an old institution, a willingness to recognise the changes required by modern sentiment, a determination to legislate for the whole nation and to place national institutions on a firm and permanent basis.

The direct attack upon national institutions to which I have been alluding is a scandal of a character never likely to escape notice. Local authorities have always been quick to resent interference, parliamentary oppositions do not sit quiet under closures, and a historic House of Lords does not succumb without a struggle. A more insidious but equally dangerous form of attack upon institutions is to be found in the perversion of executive powers. Responsible administration is essential to the art of government, and responsible administration involves the strict use of public office and of the powers held by virtue of such office for the public purpose for which alone the office and its powers exist. The days of pecuniary corruption in public departments are over, but the license of party corruption has in these latter days been unbridled. I do not wish to be misunderstood; no one doubts that one Government may differ from another, and one minister from his predecessor,

upon questions of administrative policy both in large and small matters; what, however, is essential is that the public purport and object of the administration should be the same, namely, the due exercise of public powers for the purposes for which they have been given by law or custom to the department or officer concerned.

This, perhaps, needs a little illustration. The purposes for which police powers and the right of the Executive to put courts of justice in motion exist are the preservation of public order and the prevention of crime. One Government might well differ from another as to the best method of exercising those powers for those purposes. In Ireland, for instance, while one Government might think that the ordinary process of law was in a particular case sufficient, another might think that the special process permitted by the Crimes Act was necessary. The requisite is that, in either case, the decision should depend on a consideration solely of the object for which the choice of method is given, namely, the prevention of crime and the preservation of order, and not on any extraneous motive such as the gaining of personal popularity or success in some party manœuvre in the House of Commons.

In the sphere of positive law the distinction is very familiar. A discretion is frequently given by law to some tribunal or officer to be exercised without appeal to superior authority. The High Court will not, in such a case, interfere with the exercise of that discretion, even though the court may think the decision to be a wrong one. But if it is shown that the inferior authority has not really exercised its discretion, and has decided the matter not for the purpose of carrying out the law (however mistakenly), but for what has

been called some "extraneous," "sinister," or "collateral" purpose, then the court will interfere and will quash the action of the subordinate body, as not being a *bona fide* exercise of powers. A simple example of such a case would arise if a local authority, having had personal quarrels with a builder, declined, as sanitary authority, to approve his building plans in order to revenge itself upon him; such action might purport to be an exercise of the statutory power of a sanitary authority to disapprove plans, but the court would hold, on proper proof of the facts, that it was no real exercise of a discretion which, if really exercised, would not be open to review by the court.

I have dealt with these principles of public administration at some length, in order that there may be no misunderstanding of the particular criticisms which I wish to pass upon recent cases and the lessons which it is my object to draw from them. "Wait till *we* get in," and "Much can be done by administration," were familiar utterances prior to 1906, and their meaning, within certain limits, was not open to serious objection. Outside those limits such phrases pointed the way to great scandals of administration, and thither subsequent events have actually led.

Some of these scandals have been particularly gross. The Board of Education, under the auspices of Mr McKenna, was perhaps the most prolific offender. No less than three judicial acts of the Board, done in colourable pursuance of statutory powers, have been recently quashed or reversed in courts of law, and it may be said with confidence that in each case the Board erred because of the strong bias of its political chief in favour of a certain policy contrary to the policy of the laws it had to administer. Here is the essential point of the scandal; mere policy which an opponent

dislikes is no ground relevant to the present discussion for condemning a Minister; the outrage in such cases lies in the fact that the policy adopted is contrary to the policy of the law under which alone the Minister has any powers at all to exercise; his action is a mere fraud on his powers, being exercised for the purpose of setting aside and not of carrying out the law. "One thing certainly neither the defendants nor the Board of Education can do, and that is to say that because they do not like the law as it stands they will give directions which will frustrate its objects." These words of one of the strongest and most judicially minded judges who has ever sat in the High Court provoke a feeling of astonishment that such a pronouncement should ever have been necessary. The decision of the Board of Education which led to it was the personal one of Mr McKenna, given in explicit reversal of one previously formed by his permanent advisers and after a direct personal appeal to him by the West Riding County Council for support in its policy of destroying Voluntary Schools in defiance of an Act of Parliament, which preserves them as integral parts of the system of national education.[1]

There is no space here for the full treatment of the notorious Swansea case.[2] Here the Board directly repudiated the finding of the eminent and impartial commissioner[3] chosen by themselves to hold the local inquiry; and this outrage was followed by the more gradual but scarcely less dramatic repudiation of the Board's action by eleven judges, distributed through various courts, in judgments the majority of which,

[1] See the report of Wilford *v.* the West Riding County Council in 1908, 1 K.B. p. 685.

[2] The Swansea case was nominally a decision by Mr Runciman, but the policy had been previously settled by Mr McKenna.

[3] Now Lord Justice Hamilton.

however phrased, show the clear view of the courts that the Board's decision was given with the same motive as that in the case just mentioned, namely, not that of administering but of frustrating the law.

To the thoughtless partisan these efforts of the political chiefs of the Board to carry out party policy by means of the perversion of statutory powers are praiseworthy proofs of party loyalty. In point of fact they strike at the root of responsible administration and of the rule of law itself.

Different but analogous scandals have occurred in other branches of law and administration. The Shepherd of Dartmoor supplies a farcical illustration. The dispensing powers over criminals vested in the Home Secretary form as responsible a congeries of functions as those of any Minister in the Cabinet; the administration of justice is essentially a delicate, judicial, and responsible undertaking, which the experience of ages of civilisation has clothed with tradition, procedure, and elaborate rules, in order to assist or correct the possible infirmities of the individual officer exercising the jurisdiction. Certainly no functions more clearly illustrate the principle before stated, that no extraneous or oblique motive should be allowed range in the executive acts of public officers. A court of quarter sessions had made use of the latest reform of criminal justice, passed by Mr Churchill's immediate predecessor, Mr Gladstone, to convict, after leave obtained from the Public Prosecutor, a criminal with a long record of crime, of the offences, first, of theft, and, secondly, of being an habitual criminal, and had sentenced him to three years' penal servitude for the first offence and to ten years' preventive detention for the second offence. That the sentence was too heavy is a possible view, and its mitigation by Mr Churchill in the ordinary course

of his functions might have passed without adverse criticism. What happened, however, was quite outside any ordinary official course: the court that sentenced the prisoner was not consulted; the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer visited Dartmoor in person, and interviewed the prisoner; the latter was thereafter released, having served but a few months of his sentence; Mr Lloyd George was then allowed by his colleague to make the incident the subject of some political utterances in the course of a vehement party speech, attacking rich landlords, and appealing to the miseries of the poor:—

> "My friend, the Home Secretary, and I, the other day paid a visit to Dartmoor. On that black, mist-sodden upland I saw an old man of sixty-five, in a convict garb, who had been sentenced to thirteen years' penal servitude because, under the influence of drink, he had broken into a church poor-box and stolen two shillings" ("Shame").

The grotesque inaccuracy and irrelevance of these observations merely enhance the scandal of the whole allusion. The sacred fabric of the administration of justice should be free from the sacrilege of Cabinet Ministers who would use it as a buttress for party taunts in political speeches. To control the administration of justice for the purpose of self-advertisement, or of gratifying sentiment, or of winning party and platform advantage, is an administrative scandal of the first order, for every such motive is in the clearest sense sinister and extraneous. Certainly neither the previous record nor the subsequent career of the venerable victim of Mr Lloyd George's philanthropy justified that gross abuse of the dispensing power

of the Home Office of which the above incident is an instance.

Not unlike in principle to the case of the Shepherd of Dartmoor was that of the Glamorgan riots. No doubt a Home Secretary is sometimes placed in a difficult position when called upon for military assistance by the civil power. But in the Glamorganshire case the decision to delay the troops, when their prompt arrival would have prevented a deplorable riot, bore clear traces of a determination of the Home Secretary to lose nothing in personal influence or party popularity with a class of voter whose ultimate political destination is still undecided and open to bidders. The wide powers of the Home Office exist to maintain the King's peace at home, and not to strengthen the personal or political influence of the holder of office for the time being.

A strong contrast to these tactics is presented by the operations of another Government officer also concerned in the administration of justice. Lord Loreburn admirably upheld the principle of official responsibility in appointing magistrates. But, unfortunately, his policy cannot be counted to his party for righteousness, seeing that the party tolerated the policy only because it could not spare (or was unable to extrude) Lord Loreburn. The principle that magistrates should be appointed only because they are fit to administer justice was forced by the personal influence of Lord Loreburn upon a party desirous of using the Bench as a cheap means of rewarding Liberal politicians who have done good work as agitators in the constituencies. Every Ministerialist M.P. was overwhelmed in 1906, after ten years' exclusion from office, with his followers' hopes of reward, and the social and personal distinction which the letters J.P. confer upon nonentities in their own localities seemed

one of the cheapest means of satisfying them. When a Liberal M.P., with a loyal and well-organised local following, found that the well-earned reward was denied to some of his most useful supporters by the stiff and puritan principles of Lord Loreburn, the subsequent astonished splutterings of wrath—the deputations and the memorials—are easily intelligible. Had not each Liberal been saying for months, "Wait till *we* get in," and was the obstinate rectitude of an inopportune precisian to dash their expectations? The whole incident clearly illustrates the distinction between faction and responsible government.

Quite consistent with these incidents was the action of Mr Churchill when Home Secretary, in voicing the factious sentiments of special sections of his party at the expense of judges and courts of law. Anything more indecent than the covert attack made by him upon our judicial system can hardly be imagined. It was his duty, in his capacity as Minister of Justice, to maintain the respect felt for the courts by all classes, but he went out of his way to encourage in the working classes of the country a sense of class grievance against the courts. No one suggests that judges never err, or should be wholly immune from criticism. But there are ways and seasons for criticism; courts of appeal in particular exist for the purpose; a strong professional spirit supplies another source of correction. An attack made on courts of justice by the Minister of Justice, as a class cry for factious purposes, is alike intolerable and scandalous.

It is interesting to note in this connection that it has been the consistent policy of the present Cabinet to oust the jurisdiction of courts of law from their legislation and to substitute, as universal arbiters, their own departments. A flagrant attempt in this direction in

Mr Lloyd George's Budget was defeated with the aid of some Liberal lawyers, notably Mr Buckmaster. The Trades Union Bill now before Parliament proposes, in deference to the class feeling of militant trades unionists, to deprive the judges of the jurisdiction to determine the legal effect of the Bill upon the great issue between the union and the public, concerning the limits of the political activities of the unions, and to bestow it upon an official occupying an administrative post, removable by the Government at pleasure, subject to no appeal (except, indeed, an appeal by trade unionists), and with no obligation to hear arguments or otherwise to act according to judicial procedure. Other examples might be quoted. The whole policy is reactionary and irresponsible.

A smaller but equally significant series of outrages upon the art of government has been created by the tendency of the present Cabinet to set aside the rule of ministerial responsibility for departmental acts. In consequence names both of high and low permanent officials are bandied about in the Press and Parliament as the authors and instigators of policies for which Ministers should make themselves wholly responsible. When an irregularity in the income tax collection came to light early in this year the persons who most tried to escape responsibility were the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury. When the accidental publication of a private official memorandum —the famous "Holmes circular"—brought a crowd of Radicals like a hornet's nest round the head of the President of the Board of Education, Mr Runciman, instead of admitting his own mistakes, generously admitted mistakes on behalf of almost everyone in his office but himself. There are fifty different reasons why such an attitude is improper; it is sufficient here to refer to the

fact that, whereas the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr Runciman are in a position to defend themselves for everything for which they take responsibility, their permanent officials cannot defend themselves for anything at all, whether assumed by themselves or imputed to them by their Parliamentary chiefs. They must acquiesce or starve.

The "Holmes incident" naturally suggests another tendency illustrating both irresponsible administration and the temptation to attack national institutions. One of these institutions, peculiarly English in character, is our permanent Civil Service. The phrase "the governing classes," so often used by demagogues as a term of abuse, has a reality which most Radicals, when uninfluenced by faction, are not unwilling to recognise. It imports a class of men, bred in a certain tradition of duty to country and to national institutions; bred, too, in a tradition of duty to themselves and their position in life; having sufficient education and culture to be free from the superstitions of ignorance; having also a character, partly national and partly acquired by education, of self-reliance and steadiness, which is sometimes called "the public school type." Such men do not make the best poets, artists, orators, or agitators, but they are ideal governors, officials, and administrators. The Civil Service, the *personnel* of which, in its higher ranks, is largely recruited from this class, has, as the result of its high qualifications, a tradition and spirit of world-wide reputation. Its efficiency and incorruptibility are not less remarkable than the tradition and sense of duty which make it adaptable to the service of all Cabinets, of whatever political complexion. To the loyalty of the officials of one of the departments most active in political affairs—the Board of Education—three successive Radical Presidents have recently given

testimony. Nevertheless, a confused cry has lately arisen among extreme partisans for what is called the "democratisation" of the Civil Service. The use of the word "democracy" in this connection is logically meaningless. But the comments of the Liberal Press on the "Holmes incident" show the practical aims of the cry. On the one hand, it is a purely demagogic outburst, seeking (in the name of the principle of giving everyone a chance) the substitution in the higher ranks of the Civil Service of less-educated people for the University honours-men who at present are most successful in meeting the exacting requirements of the Civil Service Commissioners; on the other hand, it means that partisan Radicals are to be appointed to the service in order to promote the kind of partisan and irresponsible administration I have been describing. So far has the latter tendency gone that a correspondent to a Liberal newspaper actually quotes John Bright as indirectly approving the American system of spoils to the victors, whereby on every change of President the Civil Service is changed so as to harmonise with the political colour of the President.[1]

The mischief of this tendency hardly needs discussion. The proposal is to destroy the best Civil Service in the world, and to make a new one on principles proved to be vicious in other countries. If Radicals appoint Radicals to the service because they want servants who will obey them from personal sympathy with and enthusiasm for their policy, Conservatives will, in self-defence, take care, when they get into office, that a clean sweep is made of officials whose main qualification for office is their dislike of Conservative policy. The result of such an "in and out" policy would certainly be to introduce inefficiency and corruption and to degrade

[1] See *The Nation*, April 8, 1911.

the service. The notorious Duez, who was lately convicted in France for embezzling, as official liquidator, the funds of the disestablished French Church, had, we were told, "political guarantees." So have the appointees of Tammany Hall. I say nothing of the orgy of pure jobbery under the pretence of politics which such a change would inaugurate. Our constitution and national ideals require a body of highly-educated civil servants who will do their work from a sense of official duty, a respect for official tradition, and as a return for the salaries they earn, not a body of idealogues, visionaries, place-hunters, or hacks.

In the foregoing pages I have sought to set forth some reminders of Conservative principles. I have made for the purpose a special mention of matters of administration, because such minor though repeated instances of misgovernment are often overlooked. The inference I draw from the record of the last six years is that the Conservative Party has a distinct and urgent mission to re-establish and maintain the art of responsible government. It must eradicate departmental hooliganism; it must punish administrative indecency; it must restore the authority of respectable tradition to the organs of government. The authors of the present mischief are pursuing the same tactics as some of them did when, in opposition, they slandered British troops during an arduous war, and otherwise aided and comforted the king's enemies. Such tactics are the tactics of anarchy. An anarchist in opposition may occasionally be a necessary evil, but an anarchist in office, wielding as a weapon of sabotage the great and venerable machine of government, and relying upon the respectful obedience of the people to that machine, is a deadly menace to the vital principle of government.

Such a mission is neither a mere abstraction nor a

mere negation. It is rather an essential condition of the success of the most progressive and positive ideas of the Conservative Party. Great and lasting reforms are impossible unless they be based upon the old tradition of the conduct of public affairs and the working of national institutions.

It is assuredly true that, in the past, the Conservative Party has been open to the reproach of undue caution in making legislative experiments in social reform. Mr Chamberlain's services to the party in inducing a bolder outlook have been incalculable. Conservatives are now willing to make great experiments, but they rightly insist that necessary reforms shall be based upon old principles. They insist that reforms shall be national and not factious—that the benefit of the whole nation and not a blow against some class or interest shall be the sole motive of statesmen. They insist also that reforms shall stand the test of national institutions—that the constituencies shall not be duped by hasty elections, nor Parliament overridden by the tactics of a caucus or a coalition. They recognise equally that sound and responsible administration is essential to the success of any reform.

It is safe, indeed, to conjecture that one-half of the doubts of the *laissez-faire* school of Cobdenite Radicalism, which at one time seemed likely to become part of the Tory heritage, were based upon the belief that the machinery of government would be incapable of standing the strain to which advanced reforms in the social sphere would subject it. There was certainly much ground for these doubts; if the factious theory of the use of executive powers becomes dominant, they will prove wholly well founded. The course of discussion upon a modern Bill of progressive aim is tolerably familiar; the more conservative critics point to possible

dangers if the principle of the Bill be unduly extended; its more enthusiastic supporters, in reply, dilate upon the ample safeguards which the Bill contains against abuse. Often the safeguard is found in the discretionary powers of supervision entrusted to a government department. In such a case the whole fate of the reform will depend largely upon the sense of responsibility of the department's political chief. If he follows the advice of his permanent officials, uses his powers strictly for the purposes the law designs them, and does not merely aim at votes and personal popularity, or even at keeping his office in quiet waters, he will be following the true traditions of government. Two recent Acts—the Act for feeding necessitous school children and the Old Age Pensions Act—both sound in principle, but as regards their details hastily passed into law, depend largely for their operation on departmental powers. If these powers be not strictly and responsibly exercised, two Acts, great in their possibilities of beneficence, may become engines of national debauchery. The experience of the country in relation to the Insurance Act has tended less to dissipate these doubts than to confirm them.

It is surprising that these axioms of politics are not more readily accepted by advanced supporters of the Government. Socialist and Labour politicians, who look forward to the general regulation by statute of private life and to a vast extension of bureaucracy as the necessary machinery, should be the first to see that their only chance of success lies in the maintenance of a civil service composed of men of the highest education and position in life, with all the tradition, and *esprit de corps* of the service to inspire them, directed by a parliamentary chief full of a deep sense of responsibility to law and tradition, and subject to criticism from the freest

exercise of constitutional rights in Parliament and elsewhere. A corrupt, incompetent, or suspect bureaucracy would ruin a socialistic system in its inception.

It will be the duty of Conservatives to insist more and more upon these very elementary principles of government, as the indispensable condition of sound policy. Nothing, indeed, will more tend to unite the old-fashioned members of the party with the advanced spirits than the giving by the latter to the former of assurances that government itself shall always be responsibly conducted upon traditional principles.

The chief constructive plank in the Conservative platform to-day—Tariff Reform—is the true type of a national policy. It represents no spirit of antagonism except that of the healthy antagonism of the nation as a whole towards its foreign trade rivals. The most fanatical of tariff reformers has never sought to use a tariff as an engine of destruction against his political opponents. The bankers, representing the most conservative elements in our commercial system and likely to be the last to appreciate the novelties of tariff reform, have leaned to the free trade side in the controversy. Yet a cry of "Down with the bankers," and appeals to the ignorant fanaticism of poor men against a class with a reputation for hoarded wealth have been no part of the propaganda of the Tariff Reform League. Tariff Reformers have consistently put forward their great scheme as one increasing and giving stability to the whole trade of the country, and benefiting employer and employed, middleman, and subsidiary trader alike. It is a scheme the supporters of which seek for no enemy to strike down, no past injury to revenge, no class to rob or to bribe.

That it will make a strenuous call upon the machinery of government I do not doubt. But, unlike the advanced

politicians of Radicalism, the Conservative Party is not afraid to trust the democracy with a tariff. Using executive powers with a sense of responsibility, and maintaining all the dignity and prestige of the departments of State, Conservatives are ready to face the results upon public administration.

In other spheres of social reform Conservatism has begun and must continue upon the right principles. An urgent need has arisen for the wider distribution of land ownership. A splendid achievement in Ireland calls us to like efforts in England. The essentials of our policy are clear: we do not pour invective upon large landowners as criminals to be expropriated because they are large; we encourage small landowners in the national interests and with proper regard to the rights of existing owners of the soil.

In education, the principle of "parent's rights" has for some time been accepted by Unionists as the true solution of an awkward administrative problem. The policy is essentially consistent with the principles here advocated; it strikes no blow at Nonconformity; it gives no privileges to the Church; it insists on equality and freedom for all. The continued resistance of Radicalism to the principle is as purely factious as the principle itself is national.

In the development of our local government system will be found the true solution of the difficulties which Liberalism would merely complicate by the subversive policy of Home Rule. In 1888 in England, and in 1898 in Ireland, two great steps were taken by Conservative Governments to establish local government on a firm and responsible popular basis. In 1902 the Education Act carried the process one step farther. There still lies ahead the readjustment of the old but vitally important institutions of the poor law, and a

further extension of the traditional Tory policy of Housing Reform to meet the demands of the new age. The line of advance open to us is that of real constitutional development, fully in harmony with Conservative tradition, and supplying the true alternative to the constitutional disruption promised by the Home Rule Bill which Mr Redmond is now forcing on the Cabinet. The principles of responsible government likewise require Conservatism to make a stand against the growth of bureaucracy and to maintain inviolate the authority of courts of justice and the right of individuals to seek before those courts the protection of their rights and liberties.

There are many other important aspects of national politics—national defence among others—which show the need for the strict application of those principles. What has been said will, however, be sufficient to give the necessary content to the generalisations with which I started. These generalisations I have illustrated by contrast with specific instances of Radical policy which represent to Conservative ideals an essentially vicious theory of government. Such generalisations, and indeed the theory of government itself, if divorced from actual cases, are apt to become empty and meaningless. What I have tried to show by the use of instances is that there is an art of government, that the essence of that art in a modern democratic state is a sense of responsibility to the principle of national unity and to the spirit and tradition of national institutions, and that Conservatism is to-day under a special and urgent duty steadfastly to maintain and practise the art in the face of the factious and disruptive tendencies of its opponents.

VIII

WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT

Mr Hobhouse has recently made it clear with characteristic maladroitness that the different sections which from time to time have composed the Government's majority in the House of Commons are not united for the furtherance of any common political programme; that each section has in view the accomplishment of a special project, and supports the Government in the hope, often ill founded, that this project will be ultimately achieved with Ministerial assistance. This hope is often so earnest as to induce one section of the Coalition to support measures which are distasteful to it. Thus Mr Redmond, in order to get Home Rule for Ireland, supported the Budget, though of opinion that it was "bad and oppressive and inflicted a cruel additional burden upon the people of Ireland." The licensing clauses of the Budget reconciled Sir Thomas Whittaker to the other clauses of that measure, though he considered that their author, Mr Lloyd George, was "like the devil with his pitchfork; whenever he sees a British industry, he sticks it into it." The allegiance of these different sections is obtained by promises, and maintained by the appointment of dates, or the allocation of a session during which their projects are to be executed. The session of 1906 was devoted to

an attempted gratification of Dr Clifford's sectarian spite. The session of 1908 was hypothecated for the satisfaction of the teetotal virulence of Sir T. Whittaker and Mr Sherwell. Mr Redmond is promised that 1912 will see a separate Parliament established in Dublin. In view of his admitted services in maintaining the Government in office he might well be thought entitled to exclusive use of this session, but he has to share it with the Welsh Radical Members of Parliament, who, in return for their subservient "loyalty" to the Government, have been given the prospect of despoiling the Church in Wales. Not long ago one of their number summed up his colleagues: "Political gifts" (he said) "have in their case produced political nepotism. They have been the recipients of the spoils of victory." In more homely language, "They have either got something or they are expecting something." Now, however, even their chairman, Mr Ellis Griffith, who tries to conceal a nature very timorous and self-distrustful under an appearance of bluster, has agreed "to fall into line and do his duty," because his supporters in the country are viewing with dismay the rapid progress the Church is making in Wales, and realise that, in the words of Alderman Thomas, of Cardiff: "This is the one chance of this generation to secure the passage of a Welsh Disestablishment Bill."

As long ago as May 1907, Mr Lloyd George wrote to a correspondent: "You ask me whether, if this Parliament runs its normal course, it is the intention of the Government to press a measure for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales through all stages in the House of Commons. To this I can give an unqualified answer in the affirmative."

No attempt was made until 1909 to fulfil this undertaking. For some time the Government evaded

its discharge on the ground that it would be inadvisable to introduce the Bill until they were better informed as to the relative strength and condition of the Church and the Nonconformist bodies in Wales. In 1906 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman appointed a Royal Commission to prosecute this inquiry, and gave as his reason for doing so that, "in his opinion, the omission to appoint a Commission when similar Bills were introduced in 1894 and 1895 was a most unfortunate one, as the Government of the day were exposed to a good deal of embarrassment in the framing and conduct of the measure." He added that the Government "were anxious to obtain the report of the Commission at an early date, as it would be of material assistance."

The Royal Commission sat until November 1910 and heard evidence. In 1909 it became clear from the newspaper reports of its proceedings that the evidence given before it exposed the falsity of the Nonconformist claim to numerical superiority over Churchmen in Wales. It therefore seemed inadvisable that Nonconformists should wait for the report, and they urged the Government to proceed without delay. The Bill was introduced in April of 1909, though Mr Lloyd George had said in 1908 that "there has never been a great question settled in this country but what (*sic*) they had had an official inquiry into the statements made in regard to it." Mr Asquith sought to justify its introduction, many months before the Commissioners could issue their report, by saying that the newspaper reports of their proceedings gave an adequate indication of the character of the report. If that contention were sound, it would have been unnecessary to publish the report. But since then the Government have published it, not, indeed, in

time to enable the electors to study it before the last election, but on the very eve of the polls, after the contest had commenced and when it was impossible to devote adequate time to its consideration. Yet it is contended that at that election the electors gave an unqualified verdict in favour of the Bill. An interesting light is thrown upon the validity of this claim by a study of the election addresses issued during the election. In Wales and Monmouthshire twenty-six supporters of the Government issued election addresses, but only eight mentioned Disestablishment, while two spoke of "religious equality." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Carnarvon Boroughs, issued in lieu of an election address what was called by his admirers "a trumpet-call to the Boroughs," but the note of Welsh Disestablishment was not heard in that blast. Of 210 Government supporters in England who issued election addresses only four mentioned Disestablishment, while six mentioned religious equality or liberty..

But the report is now published and available for study. What does it show? That the Church is the Church of a dwindling minority? It shows, on the contrary, that it is the largest religious body in the Principality, and that it is progressing more rapidly than any other. The figures given in the report do not purport to show the exact number of the adherents of each religious body. A religious census alone would show this. Such a census, though always advocated by Churchmen, and particularly demanded this year in the House of Commons by Lord Hugh Cecil, has always been opposed by Nonconformists, and was refused by the Government. Each clergyman of the Church of England who was asked the question by the Commissioners welcomed the idea of a parliamentary

religious census, and the Welsh Bishops also expressed their desire for it. But with the exception of a Congregational minister and a Baptist minister, who were the first witnesses before the Commission, none of the Nonconformist witnesses approved of it. It should be remembered that before the Irish Church was disestablished a religious census was held. In the absence of the indisputable evidence which such a census would afford, we are thrown back upon the figures given in the report of the Royal Commission, the *personnel* of which was determined by the present Government in no spirit of favour to the Church. The report contains the numbers of the Church's communicants and of the communicants or members of the different Nonconformist denominations:

Church Communicants . . .	193,081
Congregationalist members . .	175,147
Calvinistic Methodists . . .	170,617
Baptists	143,835
Wesleyans	40,811
Smaller Protestant denominations	19,870

The Commissioners make the following comments on these figures: "Taking the word 'communicant' from the Nonconformist point of view, it is plain that technically the Nonconformist figures given before the Commission are figures for members and represent the number of persons qualified to be communicants rather than the number of persons who actually communicated in 1905." And "in the Church of England statistical list the term 'communicant' indicates that each person on the list had received the Communion at least once within the period of twelve months preceding the compilation of the list. . . . The name and address of each communicant were presented to the Commission."

The inference is inevitable from these passages in

the report, that the preponderance of Church communicants over those of the different Nonconformist bodies is even greater than appears from the figures given. Every standard that can be applied shows that the Church is the largest religious body in the Principality. Take the figures given in the report for Sunday School scholars under fifteen for the year 1905. The Church claims 112,698, the Calvinistic Methodists 93,018, the Congregationalists 82,673, the Baptists 77,929, and the Wesleyans 38,100. It is true that the Congregationalists, the Wesleyans, and the Baptists claim more Sunday School members over the age of fifteen than the Church. But it is admittedly not possible to make so fair a comparison in this case as the other, for Nonconformists encourage their members to remain in Sunday Schools beyond an age at which Church communicants are accustomed to do so. Many such adult Sunday School scholars are evidently included in the figures already given of Nonconformist members.

Other figures point to the same conclusion. In 1905, 66,888 children were born in Wales, of whom 21,948 were baptised in Church. Between 1900 and 1908 the births in Wales averaged 65,722 per annum, while the baptisms in Church averaged 21,203, that is to say, nearly one-third of all the children born in Wales were baptised in Church. No Nonconformist denomination can show such a record. During the same period the marriages in Wales averaged 5248 in Church, 4652 in Nonconformist chapels, and 6238 in registry offices, showing that 31·55 per cent. of the marriages were solemnised in Church.

It is clear, then, that if the Church were disestablished no other religious body is qualified by the position it has attained, or by the number of adherents it can claim,

to take its place as the National Church of Wales, however much many of them may desire to do so. In Wales, therefore, religion would cease to enjoy State recognition, though such recognition might survive for a period in England. It is difficult to see how this change will forward the spiritual development of Wales in general, or of the Welsh Nonconformist bodies in particular. Their condition, as I shall have occasion to point out, is not so strong that they can afford to disregard the great growth of materialism in Wales, especially in Glamorganshire. Frequently we hear their own ministers lament the political atmosphere of some of their chapels, and the open political bias of their ministers, one of whom recently presided at a meeting held in his tabernacle for the purpose of enabling the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain the provisions of his Insurance Bill. If Welsh Nonconformists desire spiritual and not political advantage it would surely be better for them to unite with the strongest religious institution in their country to resist the advancing forces of indifference rather than by crippling it to further the progress of unbelief. That the Church is a growing Church is made very clear by the report of the Commission. It is even more true to say of it to-day what Mr Gladstone said in 1891: "Undoubtedly the Established Church in Wales is an advancing Church, an active Church, a living Church, and, I hope, very distinctly a rising Church, rising from elevation to elevation."

A remarkable increase is noted in the number of communicants in each of the four Welsh dioceses. Thus in St David's diocese, between 1880 and 1906, the number of communicants increased by 33,602, while the population increased by 27,698 only. On Easter Day 1871 the communicants in St Asaph diocese

numbered 7575; on Easter Day 1891, 14,534; and on Easter Day 1906, 24,938. In Bangor diocese in 1885–6, with a population of 226,040, the number of communicants was 10,029. By 1904–5 the population had decreased to 221,366, but the number of communicants had risen to 16,760. In the diocese of Llandaff the number of communicants increased from 33,453 in 1891–2 to 58,216 in 1904–5. Similar increases are to be observed in the statistics of baptisms and confirmations.

The condition of the Nonconformist bodies is not equally healthy. This fact was fully admitted on 15th May in an article in the *Westminster Gazette*, an organ very favourable to the Free Churches. It was headed: "Church Census"; "Decline in Free Church Statistics"; "Anglican Increase."

The conclusion refers to both England and Wales, and is very relevant to the present inquiry. It continues: "Churches, sittings, and ministers are continually being augmented, but the ordinary test of successful religious work shows that there has been a slackening of grip by Nonconformist Churches on the people, which has continued in some cases for the past five years." The writer gives very different evidence upon the condition of the Church. "Whilst the Free Churches have suffered losses, in some cases for three or four years, the Established Church has reported increases in communicants and in other directions. . . . Taking the three years (1907–10), there is steady growth in each department."

The numerical preponderance of the Church over any one Nonconformist denomination is so incontrovertible that advocates of Welsh Disestablishment and Disendowment are driven to the device of adding together the numbers of communicants or Sunday School scholars

found in each different denomination as if they were, for purposes of comparison with the Church, a united body. For this crude method of calculation there is no justification. Fundamental differences exist between them, which make it misleading and even absurd to reckon them as one. To attack and rob the Church they may indeed unite, but otherwise they are separate institutions, with different organisations, ideals, forms of government, and articles of belief. The profession of the doctrine of baptism by immersion marks the Baptists out from all other denominations with the sole exception, I believe, of the Churches of Christ, a small and obscure sect. But though both these sects practise baptism by immersion, they hold different views as to its purport and effect. They differ in polity also. The Calvinistic Methodists and the Wesleyans are "connectional" in their Church polity—that is to say, each individual society or church is a member of one general "connection" which is regarded as the Calvinistic Methodist Church or the Wesleyan Methodist Church respectively. Baptists and Congregationalists, on the other hand, are congregational in polity, their distinctive characteristic being that all the members, and none but the members, of the individual church have a voice in its affairs. It is difficult to see how the Primitive Methodists, who, according to the report, seceded from the Wesleyans, and who now constitute a separate denomination, can be honestly reckoned part of the same body as the Wesleyans. It is still more difficult to regard the United Methodist Church as being in close communion with the other Nonconformist denominations, in view of the fact that it was founded by Act of Parliament as recently as 1907 to unite in one body the Bible Christians, the Methodist New Connection, and the United Methodist Free Churches. The mere applica-

tion of the word "united" barely conceals the fact that the body consists of a number of units which have seceded from the principal Methodist denominations. As one Calvinistic Methodist minister said in his evidence before the Commission, union between Nonconformist bodies is not "a question of practical politics at present." When Nonconformists unite for constructive purposes as contrasted with those which are purely predatory, it will be time to regard them as members of a single religious body.

Mr Asquith, in introducing the Bill of 1909, founded his argument for the Disestablishment of the Church on a comparison between the strength of the Church and that of the aggregated Nonconformist forces. But he regarded (such were his instructions) the test of seating accommodation as most valuable for the purpose of ascertaining the relative numerical strength of the Church and of Nonconformity. He is reported to have said: "Let us go to another, which I think on the whole is a more trustworthy indication of the actual distribution of the population—that is, the accommodation provided in places of worship."

This test of seating accommodation has been shown by the report to be utterly worthless, simply because Nonconformists have made provision far in excess of their requirements. They provide sitting accommodation for no less than seventy-four per cent. of the population. The Commissioners say, as to this, that "we are clear that this accommodation is greatly in excess of the number of persons who may reasonably be expected to avail themselves of it."

But in five counties in Wales Nonconformists are not content with providing accommodation for so large a proportion as seventy-four per cent. of the population,

but obligingly provide accommodation which is in excess of the total population. Thus:

	Population.	N.C. Accom.	per cent.
Anglesey . . .	50,606	50,775	100·3
Cardiganshire . .	60,240	75,901	126
Carnarvonshire . .	126,883	141,912	111·8
Carmarthenshire .	135,328	140,993	104·18
Merionethshire .	49,149	62,466	127

So much for Mr Asquith's "trustworthy indication." He has been deceived by sectarian megalomania.

Even more ridiculous are the figures of alleged Nonconformist adherents furnished in Sir John Williams' report published with the report of the Commission. Figures showing Nonconformist adherents were supplied to the Commission, but, in the words of the report, "they were an estimate rather than an accurate figure, and of little or no use for statistics." This remark applies very forcibly to the figures of adherents given by Sir John Williams, as in several instances (anxious to err upon the right side) he claimed more Nonconformist adherents than there are persons in the parish in question.

The following are cases in point:

	Population	Alleged N.C. Adherents
Llanfair Mathafarn (Anglesey) .	703	731
Aberdaron (Carnarvonshire) .	1119	1179
Abererch (Carnarvonshire) .	1159	1281
Nevin (Carnarvonshire) . .	1755	1756
Gwytherin (Denbighshire) .	289	299
Llandoget (Denbighshire) .	247	308
Pentrefoelas (Denbighshire) .	441	483
Yspytty Ifan (Denbighshire) .	233	320
Llancadwaladr (Denbighshire) .	142	179
Efenechtyd (Denbighshire) .	213	241
Gyffylliog (Denbighshire) . .	438	530

Other similar instances could be cited.

The excessive accommodation provided by the Nonconformist bodies, and the obvious inflation of their figures in relation to adherents, throw suspicion upon the accuracy of their other figures dealing with members and Sunday School scholars.

The Disestablishment of the Church in Wales would involve the separation of the four Welsh dioceses from the province of Canterbury, of which they have for centuries been a part. As the report says: "Each of the four Welsh dioceses is a constituent unit of the province of Canterbury, and has in all respects the same status in the province as an English diocese."

Mr Gladstone admitted in this connection, in the House of Commons, on 24th May 1870, that "there is complete ecclesiastical, constitutional, legal, and, I may add — for every practical purpose — historical identity between the Church in Wales and the rest of the Church of England."

The territory of these dioceses is not exclusively contained within the geographical border-line of Wales. This border-line has never been regarded as a boundary for religious purposes, even by Nonconformists themselves. The dioceses of Bangor and St David's lie wholly within the confines of Wales, but the diocese of St Asaph has fourteen parishes entirely in England, four parishes partly in Wales and partly in England, while two parishes in the diocese of Llandaff are partly in England and partly in Wales. Eleven parishes in Chester, Lichfield, and Hereford dioceses are wholly in Wales, while thirteen parishes in those dioceses are partly in Wales. Nonconformists have always shared in this respect the eccentricities of ecclesiastical geography. The Nonconformist bodies in Wales, with the exception of the close or strict Baptists, belong to the National Council of Evangelical Free

Churches in England and Wales, and not to a Free Church Council of Wales only. A proposal made a few years ago to establish a separate Free Church Council for Wales did not meet with the approval of the majority of the Welsh Nonconformists, who objected to it on the explicit ground that exclusion from the English Nonconformist organisation would be injurious to Welsh Nonconformity. They appreciate the advantage, which they deny to the Church, of union with England. The Swansea Wesleyan witness before the Commission said that the separation of the Welsh Wesleyan Methodists from the British Annual Wesleyan Conference "would be injurious to the Welsh Methodists. . . . They get such help from English Methodists that I think it would be disastrous."

No Nonconformist denomination is confined to Wales. Most of the Baptist churches, for instance, are aggregated in county associations. There is a Welsh Baptist Union, but all the county associations are not included in it, while many belong to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. The North Wales English Union, the Monmouthshire Union, and the Glamorgan and Carmarthen English Union are not included in the Baptist Union of Wales. Twenty-five Welsh Baptist churches in England are affiliated to Welsh Baptist associations. Three in London belong to the Glamorgan and Carmarthen Association.

There are in Wales seventeen Welsh Congregationalist associations. Four Congregational churches in England belong to them. But they do not include all the Congregational churches in Wales, one of which belongs to a union in England. There is a Welsh Congregational Union, but some Congregational churches in Wales belong not to it, but to the Congregational Union of England and Wales. The Calvinistic Methodist

denomination has one hundred and seventeen churches in England. Each church or society is subject to a "monthly meeting,' which is "a quasi-corporate body consisting in practice of the minister or ministers of each individual church in a particular district." There are twenty-one such "monthly meetings" in Wales. But they do not include all Calvinistic Methodist churches in Wales, while they include some situated in England. Thus twenty-one Calvinistic Methodist chapels in England are governed by "monthly meetings" in Wales; while, on the other hand, nineteen chapels in Denbighshire and fifteen in Flintshire are under the control of the Lancashire Presbytery. The Wesleyan denomination has a strong organisation in Wales under which its societies or churches are divided into four districts, all of which are controlled by the British Annual Wesleyan Conference. But these four districts are not strictly confined to Wales and Monmouthshire, as five circuits and one mission in the First North Wales District are situated wholly or partly in England, while part of Monmouth is in the Bristol district and part of Radnor in the Birmingham district. Further, eight circuits situated wholly or partly in Wales are in the Liverpool district. The argument therefore that Wales should be strictly separated from England for religious purposes obtains slight support from a study of the organisation of the different Nonconformist bodies.

Foiled in their attempt to show that the Church in Wales is a "dwindling minority," its plunderers assert that it is non-national and alien. Even Mr Asquith, in introducting the 1909 Bill, resorted to this argument. He said: "When the Principality of Wales became part and parcel for political purposes of the kingdom of England, contemporaneously or consequentially, the

ancient Church of Wales was incorporated into or annexed to the Church of England. The English Government succeeded in doing with the Welsh Church what it could never do and never has succeeded in doing with the Welsh people—it denationalised it."

The historical unsoundness of this statement is sufficiently shown by the fact that for two centuries and a half before Welsh members were returned to Parliament, the Welsh chapters and clergy sent proctors to represent them in the Convocation of Canterbury. The statement in the Prime Minister's speech that the English Government "denationalised the Church" is hardly more accurate than that which preceded it. Though expressed in more scholarly language, it does not differ in substance from the hackneyed charge that the Church in Wales is "alien." It is difficult to admit that the Church was denationalised in the eleventh century if it be true that for years subsequently it numbered the total population of the country among its adherents. It would be not easy to conceive a Church more essentially national. What religion is indigenous in Wales if a Church can be justly branded as alien which has existed in Wales from the earliest times, and far longer than any other religious institution? It requires some assurance for Nonconformists to call the Church "alien" and "non-national." Their own denominations have existed between one hundred and two hundred years only, have never commanded the support of the whole Welsh nation, and, with the possible exception of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, had their origin in England and not in Wales. The Church, on the other hand, is, in the words of Mr Bryce, "the legitimate historical successor of the Church of St David," and in the words of the Prime Minister, "existed undoubtedly as a living and

a working Christian agency some considerable time before the mission of St Augustine to the Saxons."

But the arguments in favour of Disestablishment excite comparatively slight enthusiasm among the "salt of the earth" political Nonconformists. What really interests them is Disendowment. They have been "blooded" by Mr Ellis Griffith in the covetous atmosphere of Anglesey. Experienced in their own financial instability, they know that lack of funds would cripple the Church and retard its progress as nothing else could. That cupidity supplies their campaign with its sole driving-force is evident alike from their actions and their speeches. When the Welsh Church Bill was introduced in 1893, Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen, then member for Tonbridge, moved an amendment to the effect that the Bill should be divided into two Bills—the one to deal with Disestablishment and the other with Disendowment. This proposal proved unacceptable to the Welsh Radical members of Parliament, who in their eagerness to oppose it were compelled to admit that the Disendowment clauses in the Bill appealed to them far more than those which merely provided for Disestablishment. There was "business" in one and none in the other. Thus Sir George Osborne Morgan, who then sat for East Denbighshire, said that he "did not know of a single Nonconformist in Wales who was in favour of Disestablishment without Disendowment"; and Mr D. A. Thomas, who represented Merthyr Tydvil, declared that "no Welsh member would entertain for a moment the idea of getting Disestablishment without Disendowment."

More recently, Mr Ellis Griffith, Chairman of the Welsh Parliamentary Party (*Nil desperandum Teucro duce!*), admitted in the House of Commons that he had recommended the 1909 Bill on the ground that if the

funds arising from Disendowment of the Church of England in Anglesey went to supplement old-age pensions for the county, the pensionable age in Anglesey could be reduced from seventy to sixty-five or even sixty. This shabby argument speaks for itself. He did not wholly deny having induced the people of Anglesey, his constituents, to vote for the Bill on the ground that it would produce "bread-and-butter" for them. He denied, it is true, that he originated the phrase "bread-and-butter," and attributed it to "an irresponsible person in the audience," but he admitted that immediately after the alleged interruption he "sought to justify the Bill from the material standpoint."

Is it surprising that the campaign should gain adherents among greedy and ignorant persons encouraged by Mr Ellis Griffith to believe that the plunder of the Church will provide them with earlier pensions?

I venture to summarise the effect of these Disendowment provisions, which, we are asked by Mr Asquith to believe, "are not inspired by any animosity to the Church of England." The churches and parsonages are to be left to the Church—not a very intoxicating concession, seeing that, in the words of the report, "during the last two hundred years nearly all the parish churches in Wales have been completely rebuilt or considerably restored," and that "in recent years the sums spent on church building and restoration in Wales have had to be provided by private donations and by the subscriptions of the Church of England Church Extension and Building Societies. The total amount of voluntary contributions for this purpose for the four Welsh dioceses since 1840, so far as was ascertainable, is given in the diocesan statistics as £3,332,385."

The total net income from Church endowments in Wales is £273,747, of which £243,987 is derived from

parochial endowments and £29,760 from diocesan endowments. Of the £243,987 which is derived from parochial endowments, £110,737 comes from tithe, £35,936 from glebe lands, and £97,314 from other sources. The 1909 Bill proposed to take away the whole of these endowments with the exception of £20,584 a year, or 1s. 6d. in the pound. In 511 of the 983 incumbencies in Wales every penny of endowment would disappear, while 132 other parishes would be left with less than £10 a year each. £17,069 now payable in curates' grants would be taken away without any compensation being given to the curates, of whom there are 561 in Wales. More than half the income from parochial endowments is derived from endowments added since 1703 by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne's Bounty. About one-third of this amount is derived from English sources, so that the Bill confiscates to secular uses in Wales not only Welsh ecclesiastical property, but some English ecclesiastical property also. In fact, the disendowment net is spread as wide as possible so as to catch English Church property because it is situate in Wales, and property situate in England because it belongs to the Welsh Church.

The immediate result of Disendowment would be the amalgamation of parishes. This result has followed in Ireland. Great efforts have been made in Wales of late years to divide up the larger parishes and form new parishes where new centres of population have arisen. This policy has been dictated by the view that it is advisable that the area under the charge of each clergyman should be as small as is economically possible. The execution of this policy has been made possible only by grants from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and by the collection of voluntary subscriptions. When the endowments conferred by the Ecclesiastical Com-

missioners are taken away, together with practically all the other endowments the Church possesses, not only will it be impossible to pursue this policy of forming new parishes, but it will be necessary to re-unite those already formed with the parishes from which they were taken. Thus much of the work of the past will be undone. It is difficult to see how this contraction of activity can benefit Nonconformists. The right of every man in a parish, irrespective of creed, to call for the spiritual ministrations of the parish priest will disappear. While the Nonconformist minister looks after his own supporters only, the clergyman tends everyone in his parish who desires his ministration; and it is a matter of common knowledge that many Nonconformists avail themselves of his visits.

What is the pretext for this wholesale spoliation? Is it that the tithe-payer is to be freed from the burden of paying tithe? On the contrary, he must pay in the future as in the past, not to the parson, but to the County Council official. That the Bill is designed merely to injure the Church, without relieving anyone, is manifest from the fact that tithe which is paid each year to lay tithe-owners to the amount of £38,968 a year is not touched by the Bill. While lay tithe must still be paid into the pockets of its owners, ecclesiastical tithe is to be devoted to the provision of public halls, libraries, institutes, and other secular purposes, not because the money is wanted particularly for those purposes, but because it must be given to some purpose when taken from the Church, and because even this Government will not accept the base demagogy of Mr Ellis Griffith's suggestion that Church funds should be used to lower the pensionable age in Anglesey. Under the 1895 Bill, different "objects" were specified, viz., a Welsh library or a Welsh museum. They have been

provided for since out of the Imperial Exchequer, and it became necessary to substitute a new destination for the Church's funds. As Mr Balfour pointed out, it is not in order to use them for better purposes that the Government take away the endowments from the Church. They take them away from the Church primarily, and then look round for some decent use to which they may put them.

Welsh orators in their native land delude their fellow-countrymen into supporting Disendowment by primitive and impudent misrepresentations. They say that the endowments belong not to the Church, but to the State, and that the State can do what it pleases with them. Thus Mr Ellis Griffith is reported in the *Wrexham Advertiser* of 30th September to have informed the Welsh National Liberal Council that "the State not only established, but has endowed the Church," and that the tithe rent-charge was "not a spontaneous votive offering of the whole Christian people, but a tax imposed by Imperial authority and enforced by Imperial power."

That this statement is attributable only to ignorance or a wilful desire to mislead, and that it cannot be excused on the ground of accident, is evident from the fact that he repeated it a few days later at Holyhead. A more astonishing misstatement was never made, even by this loose and inaccurate controversialist.

As Professor Freeman said: "The tithe can hardly be said to have been granted by the State. The state of the case is rather that the Church preached the payment of tithe as a duty, and that the State gradually came to enforce that duty by legal sanction." And Lord Selborne said: "It is quite certain tithes were never the property of or payable to the State," and "the tithe was never at any time a public fund or revenue."

That Mr Asquith agrees with Professor Freeman and

Lord Selborne in thinking that tithes were never a tax, but were voluntary in origin, and disclaims Mr Ellis Griffith's theory, is clear from two circumstances. First, he did not use the argument that tithe was a tax when he introduced the 1909 Bill. Secondly, during the debate on the Welsh Church Bill 1895, Sir John Gorst moved to omit the words "since 1703" from the Bill, so that the Church would retain "all private benefactions." Mr Asquith refused to accept this amendment on the ground that it would "give to the Disestablished Church the whole of the tithe, since it was an arguable position to take up that, although tithes became a compulsory tax after a certain date, they were originally a voluntary obligation, and were given by private persons out of their own resources. If the amendment were adopted it might be open to a Court of Law to say that practically the whole revenue of the present Established Church passed to the representative body of the Disestablished Church. In other words, the Bill, instead of disendowing the Church, would re-endow it."

The only argument ever presented in justification of the view that the Church is not entitled to its endowments is that there was such a breach of continuity in the corporate existence of the Church at the Reformation as to make it right to sequestrate the property with which the Church was endowed before the Reformation. But this argument was emphatically repudiated by the Prime Minister in 1905: "I am not one of those who think, as used to be currently assumed, that the legislation of Henry VIII. transferred the endowments of a national establishment from the Church of Rome to the Church of England. There has been, amid all these changes, a substantial identity and continuity in our national Church from earliest history to the present time"; and by Professor Freeman, who says in his book:

"The facts of history compel us to assume the absolute identity of the Church of England after the Reformation with the Church of England before the Reformation."

There is no real difference between tithes and other Church property, except that, while the other property was derived from occasional and voluntary gifts, tithes originated in an obligation which the Church taught was incumbent on all Churchmen. This obligation for many years had no more binding force than the authority and persuasiveness of the Church among its members could confer. Then it became a generally recognised custom, and subsequently was enforced by ecclesiastical law. How little a State-imposed tax was the source of tithe is shown by the fact that until very modern times it was not recoverable in temporal Courts. If, as is sometimes suggested, the tithe was given for the benefit of the poor, it is inconceivable that the poor should have lost their right to receive it, and that no trace of that right should survive at the present time.

But whatever was the origin of tithes, they have been enjoyed by the Church for centuries, and that circumstance itself, according to the policy of our law, should constitute a good title to them. Uninterrupted enjoyment of land and interests in land for a limited period of time has always been regarded as conferring a good title. But a curious distinction is made by Nonconformists in the application of this rule to their property and to that of the Church. Long enjoyment by the Church of her endowments is to be a ground for their deprivation and diversion to secular uses. But Nonconformists have not failed to avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from the acquisition of a title to land by prescription or long enjoyment. They have even secured for themselves an Act of Parliament —the Dissenters' Chapels Act 1844—which conferred

on them a special law of limitation. The circumstances under which this statute became law are interesting in view of the attack now made on the Church's endowments. During the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth centuries, a number of chapels were built and endowed in England and Ireland by charitable persons, members of the Presbyterian denomination. The founders of these chapels regarded the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as an essential article of their faith, and the trust deeds contained provisions which, while not expressly requiring the profession of Trinitarian doctrine, were held on legal construction to confine the use of the chapels and endowments to Trinitarian Nonconformists. At the time that these trusts were founded Unitarian doctrines were not professed by any religious denomination in this country. But during the eighteenth century Presbyterians in England and Ireland began to secede from Trinitarian teaching, with the result that at the end of the century all those in England and many in Ireland had become Unitarians. They still, however, remained in possession of their chapels and endowments. The question then arose whether they were entitled to them, and it was ultimately decided by the House of Lords that they were not. From the difficulties in which this decision placed them they were rescued by the Dissenters' Chapels Act, which provided that if a congregation of Nonconformists has occupied a chapel and taught in it the same religious doctrines for twenty-five years, it becomes absolutely entitled to it, and to any fund with which it is endowed, even though these doctrines differ fundamentally from those held by the founders. Now we are confronted with the spectacle of Nonconformists who were reinstated by Act of Parliament in the possession of property which they had forfeited by breach of trust

presuming to question the Church's title to endowments which it has enjoyed for centuries.

Even on the assumption, which has been repudiated by the Prime Minister, that the Church after the Reformation was not identical with the Church before the Reformation, it cannot be pretended that the divergence between the two is comparable to the difference between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism.

If the Church were making poor use of its property, there might be some ground for taking it away, notwithstanding its ancient title, but the testimony of opponents makes it clear that the exact contrary is the case. Mr Asquith has told us that, "during the last seventy years at any rate, in the Church of England and Wales there has been opened a new chapter, a new beneficent and fruitful chapter. . . . She now, by every means which an enlightened ecclesiastical statesmanship and a strong spiritual devotion to the best needs of the Welsh people could dictate, is overtaking, or endeavouring to overtake, the arrears of the past."

It would be difficult to conceive any circumstances better calculated to establish the title of a Church to its endowments than that it has enjoyed them for centuries, and that it is exhibiting a "strong spiritual devotion to the best needs of the people."

Another tribute to the Church's work from a less authoritative but still important source may be noticed. Mr Edgar Jones, M.P. for Merthyr Tydvil, is reported by the *Manchester Guardian*, as recently as 13th September 1911, to have told the Welsh Baptist Union that "no one denied that the Church of England on the whole to-day in Wales was making fair use of the money it had. They must not prejudice themselves and blind themselves to obvious truths. The Church to-day made just and active use of the money."

The campaign, then, is one to deprive an ancient and not a wealthy Church of moneys well and piously used, and to bestow such moneys upon secular objects. The motives of the campaign are as mean, and petty, and spiteful as its certain consequences.

It must be remembered too that this claim to rob political opponents by Act of Parliament is made at a moment when the Constitution is in suspense. Welsh Disestablishment has never been the specific issue of an election. Not one voter in a hundred thought of it last December. Yet it will be hustled through a gagged House of Commons at the fag end of a congested session. No Second Chamber can mitigate its sordid malice; no normal constitutional method can enforce a reference to the constituencies.

It is much to be hoped that Church laymen alike in England and Wales will look to their own resolution, and to that alone, for a remedy in these menacing circumstances. We are living, as Mr Balfour truly said, "under revolutionary conditions." Home Rule is the first-fruit of the Revolution; Welsh Disestablishment is to be its crowning mercy.

The methods by which Mr Lloyd George and Mr McKenna rose to notoriety are very capable of an application at once analogous, extensive, and infinitely more defensible. Let Churchmen make up their minds to confront desperate opponents with extreme methods of resistance; let them, in a word, be ranged with those who allow no moral or constitutional validity to the acts of the Government until the Second Chamber is restored. This temper and no other makes victory conceivable, and it will (should the worst happen) make success more disastrous than failure to those who are laying hands upon the things which belong to God.

IX

TARIFF REFORM

The prospects of the Unionist Party at the next General Election have improved in every month of the past two years. It is now sufficiently clear, on the evidence of the by-elections (and hardly less when we have failed than when we have won), that the Government is heartily distrusted by the country. The electors now fully realise that the pledges and promises on the strength of which the Government were returned were never even intended for fulfilment. They have consistently refrained from doing what they undertook, and have been most assiduous in the pursuit of large policies upon which the country was never consulted. Their career has been a continuous trail of inconsistency. A scheme of Old Age Pensions on a non-contributory basis was introduced, and commended especially because it was so different from the German scheme. This anti-German recommendation was, however, abandoned in the later scheme of National Insurance whose German origin is acclaimed as its special merit.

We have also had from the author of the latter measure a "great" Budget. The epithet is at least justified by the gravity of the consequences which it has produced. It has caused that upheaval in the relations of the different social classes, which has been

the real parent of the industrial unrest of the last twelve months; it has led to a great mass of litigation; and it has caused an immense expenditure of taxpayer's money for an insignificant return. Whenever the Government are attacked for their failure to economise and to reduce the heavy burden on the taxpayer and on industry, Mr Lloyd George declares the criticism to be an impertinent exhibition of hostility to these measures. He always imagines he has turned the table on the accusers who charge him with increasing instead of diminishing public expenditure and taxation by asking to which of his measures the Unionist Party were opposed. The proper answer is to make the accuser realise he is the accused person and is on his defence. He must show whether he or the Government of which he is a member has effected any economies in those services in which riotous extravagance was freely alleged to exist when they were in opposition. The truth is that there has been no economy, except in the reduction of the Sinking Fund and the consequent endangering of the national credit, and that the extravagance of Liberal administration has been superimposed on the very structure against which the charges of top-heaviness were so freely levelled in former years.

While criticism has been so far effective that it has brought the Unionist Party to the verge of victory, there are, it must be confessed, some misgivings in the minds of certain people whether the party has a sufficiently determined and coherent policy to keep it in power for any length of time. Unless the party is unanimous in the support of the main items of the Unionist programme, the return to power would be shortly followed by irretrievable disaster. In past years these doubts and misgivings were mainly associated with

the comprehensive Unionist policy of Tariff Reform. The nine years which have elapsed since that policy was promulgated by Mr Chamberlain have brought some changes. The leader himself has been laid low by sickness, and is unable to take any further active part in the campaign. In another respect also changes have manifested themselves; Tariff Reform began as an Imperial policy; then it gained strength and support from those who saw in it a means for securing and protecting the British market for the British working man; and, finally, it has swung back to a policy based on a broader conception of Imperial unity embracing not only industrial protection but Imperial consolidation.

For all these reasons, therefore, we must welcome the declaration made at the Albert Hall on 15th November by Lord Lansdowne and Mr Bonar Law.[1] This declaration, elaborated and explained by Mr Bonar Law at Ashton-under-Lyne, defines precisely where the party stands at the present day in relation to the tariff issue. There can be no further opportunity for our opponents to declare that our position on these issues is ambiguous, or for the country to doubt that the returning of the Unionist Government to power means the early introduction of a tariff budget.

It may, however, be in the public interest to remind the country of the precise terms of that declaration, lest we should stand in *eadem injustitia* with the present Ministry and lay ourselves open to the accusation of smuggling Tariff Reform into operation as Ministers are attempting to smuggle the Home Rule Bill through the rent they have made in the Constitution.

[1] This passage must be read with the concluding part of the speech which follows. The interposition of a General Election before duties upon food stuffs, if recommended by the Conference, are made effective, obviously leaves the argument upon principle unaffected.

"We shall be prepared," said Lord Lansdowne, "to give a twofold undertaking, so that there may be no doubt in the minds of the nation as to our meaning and intentions. In the first place, we are ready to undertake that we will specify precisely and exactly the amount and the limits within which we propose to resort to taxation of this kind, and we will undertake that we will not exceed those limits without further authorisation from the people of this country. That is one undertaking. And the other is this. We will undertake that any revenue raised from taxes of this kind shall not be treated as ordinary revenue, but shall be used for the purpose of alleviating other burdens falling upon the shoulders of the working classes, and in that way we are confident we shall be able to make good the assurance given by Mr Balfour that Colonial reciprocity should not involve any increase in living to the working classes."

Mr Bonar Law identified himself entirely with the programme outlined by Lord Lansdowne.

"As Lord Lansdowne has told you, we shall not treat any revenue derived from the so-called Food Taxes, whatever they are, which may be imposed for Preference—we shall not treat it as ordinary revenue; we shall use it to diminish the burdens which in other ways are falling upon the poorer classes of this country. It will not be an additional taxation; it will be a readjustment of taxation: and owing to this revenue, and owing to the expansion which I am certain will come with this change of system, I say, then, that instead of adding to the cost of living, the adjustment which we shall make will make the burden smaller instead of greater which falls on the working classes."

The position of the Unionist Party is, then, perfectly

clear. We stand where Mr Chamberlain stood in 1903 —we will give the Dominions preference, and we will at the same time diminish rather than increase the thirteen millions of taxation upon food-stuffs which are already imposed upon the people of this country.

To this declaration will be opposed, no doubt, the old and dishonest cry, "Your food will cost you more." It has, however, become exhausted by repetition, and the facts will tend to emerge in time from the welter of misrepresentation. The apprehension, though formidable politically, is baseless that the 2s. preference on foreign wheat would increase the price of the quartern loaf. The study of the returns issued by the Board of Trade in November 1912 proves certain facts conclusively.

In the first place, the price of wheat and bread did not drop for thirty years after the repeal of the corn duties. In the second place, the imposition of Sir Michael Hicks Beach's corn duty in April 1902, and its repeal on the 1st July 1903, had obviously not the faintest effect on the tendency of prices, for these remained level during the period of its imposition, and rose abruptly almost immediately after its repeal. In the third place, it is clear that the 2s. per quarter variation in the price of the whole wheat supply (and the argument in relation to a portion is *a fortiori*) makes no difference whatever in the price of the loaf; and that while for the last eighteen years the price of a quarter of wheat has varied by 14s. per quarter, yet bread during that period has only varied by one penny on the 4-lb. loaf.

The dishonesty of the attempt to re-raise from the grave the old misrepresentation that the imposition of 2s. duty on the portion of the supply means dearer bread is best shown by an appeal to the Free Traders

themselves. Sir Alfred Mond (and he is, or ought to be, a very good judge of protection), in a letter to *The Morning Post*, 23rd December 1910, says:—

> "The question when an import duty becomes operative is surely not so mysterious as many controversialists imagine. The answer must depend upon the proportion of the untaxed to the taxed supply, of the amount of the internal competition behind the tariff wall, as also upon the amount of profit made by the vendors, and the extent of the demand by intending purchasers."

The *Free Trader*, the organ of the Free Trade Union, remarked in February 1908 that:—

> "The normal effect of a duty upon prices cannot be the same where an elastic portion of the supply is produced at home as where the article is entirely of foreign production."

The *Westminster Gazette* recently in a leading article, 18th September 1911, stated that:—

> "In those years (*i.e.* years of normal good harvests) the country (France) is independent of outside supplies, and the protective duties are not felt or little felt."

If, then, as appears from the return, a duty of 2s. per quarter does not affect the price of a quartern loaf, how much less can a 2s. duty increase prices when it is only proposed to levy it on a portion of the whole supply. In view of these admissions no Unionist candidate who faces the question with directness and courage need be alarmed by the attempt to exploit our proposals for party purposes.

Further, both the actual trend of events and the

tendency of the preference itself would be to increase continually the proportion of the supply which is exempt from the tax, and to decrease proportionately that part of the supply which will be compelled to pay a 2s. duty. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable than the rapidity with which the population and the output of the self-governing Dominions has increased in the present generation. Even since Mr Chamberlain launched his campaign the growth has been stupendous and has more than justified his prevision. He saw, in what were then termed our colonies, the greatest markets for our output and the strongest potential support of the common burden of Imperial defence. We have seen in the last twelve months what the Overseas Dominions have been able and willing to offer us in the form of battleships, and their contribution has been, and will be still more in the future, a substantial item in the total sum of money voted for the naval defence of the Empire as a whole. But if these are the facts of to-day, what at the present rate of increase will be the future?

I am reminded of those well-known passages in which Burke in 1775 prophesied the coming development of America :—

> "If amid these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, an angel should have drawn aside the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of the country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him the little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him, 'Young man, there is America, which at this day serves

> little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners: yet shall, before you taste death, show itself equal to the whole of the commerce which now attracts the world.'"

Never was a prophet more swiftly justified. The population of the American States at the time this speech was made was hardly more than three million, fifteen years later it was nearly four million. In 1830 it was thirteen million, in 1880 it was fifty million, and in 1910 it was over ninety-one million. Hardly less rapid in proportion has been the growth in Canada; and to quote Burke again:—

> "Whether I put the present numbers too high or too low is a matter of little moment. Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world that, state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute continues the exaggeration ends. Whilst we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it. Whilst we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing 2,000,000, we shall find we have millions more to manage. Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood than they spread from families to communities and from villages to nations."

The question, then, which the electorate have to decide is whether this country will stake out for itself by a system of preference the immense markets which lie before it within the Imperial Dominions in the future, or whether it will allow, by an efflux of time and by the operation of this indifference, other nations, not bound as we are in the commercial shackles of an outworn system, to claim for themselves the birthright

which actually belongs to us. It is hard to believe that the people of this country have failed to realise the lesson of the recent attempt to establish reciprocity between Canada and the United States. That attempt was, admittedly, not merely a commercial but a political manœuvre, designed to turn the current of trade and political union from East and West to North and South. The commercial and political chain linking the United Kingdom and Canada, and Canada and Australia, was to be broken. A new relationship, leading by steps from a customs union to a political union, was to be established within the North American continent. The attempt failed; but if it had succeeded, as most people expected, and as Free Traders desired, what should we have done to discourage a scheme disastrous to the Empire, and costing us perhaps to-day, but certainly in an increasing degree in the future, that very naval and military assistance which is now the most splendid assurance of the future of the Empire? The answer to the question is that we had done nothing. Had Canada turned away from our outworn commercial system, discouraged by the barren results of nine years' fiscal agitation in this country, to a country which had something to offer and was prepared to offer it, the blame would have rested on the United Kingdom, not on the Dominion of Canada. Canada has done her best, and it only remains for us to do our part.

What, on the other hand, have Free Importers to offer? Can the continuance of the steady increase in the cost of all commodities which marks the present epoch be any cure for a state of affairs which, if one-tenth of what has been said by Free Trade orators from 1903 onwards had been true, would have long ago starved to death more than twenty million of our people,

and which has, in fact, produced the present situation in our industrial life by making every increase in wages of the last ten years illusory and of no real effect? Yet this is all that Cobdenism can suggest. What we offer, on the other hand, is the remission of taxation on existing food taxes in so far as they are produced within the Empire, and the devotion of the sum obtained by Imperial preference to the furtherance of our policy of social reform. At the same time, the vigorous development of the total material resources of the Empire would enable us so far to increase the supply of food and raw materials as to check that present rise in prices caused by excess of demand over supply, by which we in this island are principally embarrassed. The conceptions which I have indicated in rough outline have attained an ever-increasing hold on the mind and imagination of intelligent men in this country. The rise in food prices, the growth of the Dominions, the American reciprocity movement, and the growth of Naval assistance, have all had their effect, and the joint result of all these changes will not be affected by waving once more the tattered banner of the free food agitation.

The effect of all these changes, partly the result of the natural evolution of Tariff Reform, partly also the consequence of legitimate pressure from different sections of supporters, as investigation into their needs and interests became more scientific, has been to consolidate all sections of Unionist support until it may be said with confidence that there is at this moment no other policy before the country which counts among its active supporters more than one-half of the people. It appears worth while, therefore, to examine in greater detail the economic and political changes of the last nine years, in order to demonstrate once again the

soundness of the statesmanship which impelled Mr Chamberlain to adopt this policy.

Great stress was properly laid in the early days of the campaign on the significance of the emigration movement, whether regarded absolutely as a purely British phenomenon or by comparison with an industrial nation like Germany. Assuming the existence of a state of affairs abroad which exercises an attractive influence upon the adventurous spirits of both countries, we should expect in both countries something like equal emigration rates, or at least a similar direction in the dimensions of the movement from those countries. As the following figures show, the very reverse is the case :—

Emigration from the United Kingdom and Germany.

	United Kingdom.		Germany.	
	Amount.	Per 10,000 of Population.	Amount.	Per 10,000 of Population.
1902	101,547	24	32,098	5½
1906	194,671	25	31,074	5
1910	233,709	52	25,531	4
1911	261,808	58	...	...

These figures show an enormously larger volume of emigration from the United Kingdom than from Germany; a rapidly increasing rate from the United Kingdom, and a steadily declining rate from Germany. In proportion to the respective populations of the two countries, emigration from the United Kingdom is now from fourteen to fifteen times as heavy as from Germany. From another point of view this phenomenon is illuminating. The natural increase of population (*i.e.* excess of births over deaths) in this country is

about 420,000 per annum. Our annual loss by emigration is therefore about 62 per cent. of the natural increase. In Germany, on the other hand, the natural increase of population is about 850,000 per annum, and the loss by emigration is little more than 3 per cent. of this increase. The increase of the British population is thus, in consequence of the loss by emigration, reduced to about 150,000 per annum, compared with considerably more than 800,000 per annum in Germany. It is deplorable that all the efforts of science, statesmanship, and administration labouring so incessantly for more than a generation to save the lives of our people, have been nullified by inability to support the population in our own country. At the same time we cannot ignore the fact that German population is growing at a rate more than five times as large as our own.

It is not material to the argument of the previous paragraph that at the present time about 80 per cent. of the emigration from the United Kingdom is to countries within the Empire. We are concerned here only to note from the facts set out that there is this enormous drain continuing and growing in volume each year, whereas in Germany it is small and diminishing. It is impossible to attribute this difference to any other cause than that the economic promise of this country is less capable of satisfying the primary and fundamental needs of her people.

Nor does this conclusion lack the support of striking statistical facts. It is well known that the iron and steel trades supply the most conclusive index of national production and prosperity. The table given below shows how we stand in this matter in recent years as compared with our principal competitors :—

	World's Exports.	Great Britain.	Germany.	U.S.A.	Belgium.	France.
	Tons.					
1894	4,046,000	65·6	18·6	2·0	9·9	3·8
1904	8,576,000	38·0	32·3	13·6	10·7	5·3
1907	11,603,000	44·5	29·7	11·2	9·7	4·9
1912 Estimated	15,800,000	32·3	36·0	19·0	10·1	2·7

It will be seen that between 1894 and 1912 our share of the total trade of the world in these trades has sunk from 65 per cent. to 32 per cent. Germany, on the other hand, has risen from 18 per cent. to 36 per cent., or, in other words, has doubled her production. The United States of America, which started with little or nothing, has already secured 19 per cent. of the total trade, while Belgium and France remain almost stationary. The comparison is hardly more to the advantage of this country than that of the emigration figures on which I have already commented.

Confirmation of this general conclusion is supplied by the unemployment figures for the two countries. The Board of Trade index number of trade-union unemployment in 1911 was 3·0 per cent., as compared with only 1·9 per cent. in Germany. In 1910 the British figure was 4·7 per cent., compared with 3·6 per cent. in 1906 and 4·0 per cent. in 1902. Some doubts have been thrown on the merit of the Board of Trade figure by Mr Bowley in a paper read before the Royal Statistical Society a few days ago, the effect of whose criticism is to raise the index for 1910 from 4·7 to 5·2. Assuming, what must be obviously less than the melancholy truth, that this figure, representative of trade-union experience, is typical of the conditions throughout the entire working class — skilled and unskilled, organised and un-

organised—there must have been in 1910 about 750,000 persons constantly seeking employment. Statesmanship cannot afford to ignore any longer the inability of this country to provide fully for the needs of this large army of unemployed workmen. Their very existence is a danger to the State.

While opportunities for employment have diminished, the last five years have shown a decided tendency to increased cost of living. Prices have steadily risen until in May the percentage increase in the cost of food-stuffs was 26 per cent. above the level of 1901–5. The following figures on this point are taken from the *Economist* of 8th June:—

Course of Prices in the United Kingdom.

	Cereals and Meat.	Other Foods.
Basis (average 1901–1905) . .	100	100
End of December 1911 . . .	120	135½
„ January 1912 . . .	121½	135
„ February „ . . .	124	137
„ March „ . . .	123½	133
„ April „ . . .	125	128
„ May „ . . .	126½	126

During the present year the staple food-stuffs consumed by the people have continued to rise steadily, until last month (June 1912) the average price was 26½ per cent. higher than the average of the period 1901–5. The other foods (namely, tea, sugar, etc.) have shown a downward tendency; nevertheless, their price is still higher by 26 per cent. than during the datum period. Nor has there been any compensation for this increase in cost of food-stuffs by any corresponding change in the remuneration of labour. At most the wages earned in 1910 showed an advance, according to the Board of Trade, of not more than about 3 per cent. over the period 1901–5. Therefore the purchasing power of the

working classes in this short interval declined by about 22 per cent. The official figures of Germany and the United States show that in the same interval wages have, in those countries, more than compensated for the increased cost of living. The general conclusion from the evidence is unmistakable. Even Mr Chiozza Money admitted some time ago that, "At the present time food costs about 15 per cent. more than it did in 1899. . . . It is to be feared, therefore, that the proportion of poverty has increased since 1899, since, although wages have risen, they have not risen as greatly as the cost of living. The rise in money wages since 1899 has been about 6 per cent., which has only covered part of the increase in the cost of living. . . . A very real decrement has been suffered by all classes of wage-earners, which is to say, by the mass of the British people. It is a misfortune which, because it directly affects so many, is a national misfortune."—In *Daily News*, 22nd March 1911.

The evidence, therefore, of industrial conditions as reflected in emigration, unemployment, wages, and cost of living proves that this country is becoming an increasingly undesirable place to live in for the working classes. When the condition established by this evidence is contrasted with that of Germany or the United States, two countries in which the economic and industrial position is most nearly comparable with that of our own country, the conclusion is inevitable that the disparity is mainly attributable to the difference of fiscal system.

Next let us examine the changes in the political organisation of the British Empire which have been instrumental in awakening the nation to a full realisation of the economic and political expediency, and even urgency, of the adoption of an Imperial fiscal system.

By an Imperial fiscal system is not meant a common system of tariffs throughout the Empire, or even inter-Imperial Free Trade. It is left for an avowedly Free Trade Government to reconcile a common tariff system in the United Kingdom, with differential and possibly discriminating tariffs in and between the various parts. We mean by the expression Imperial fiscal system, only a system in which each of the constituent parts will determine with absolute independence the tariff best suited to its needs, and in which the special interests of the Empire shall be duly safeguarded.

The first and most significant step in the direction of Imperial commercial unity in the last nine years has been the growth of Preference, not alone with the United Kingdom, but also between the Dominions themselves. In 1903 Canada alone of the Dominions gave a preference to British trade. Since then New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa have established similar preferences in their tariffs, designed especially to favour and encourage British trade. The advantages of these preferential tariffs are being rapidly extended by each of the self-governing Dominions to the others. Further, a beginning has been made with the extension of the same system of special lower tariffs by the Dominions to the Crown Colonies. The active assistance of the home Government was, indeed, given to both Canada and the West Indies in the arrangement of terms by which mutual reciprocal preference could be granted by these two portions of the King's dominions to one another. An elaborate system and network of mutual preferences has thus been brought already into existence in and between the different parts of the Empire. The system is obviously incomplete. So long as the United Kingdom stands completely outside this beneficent movement, and refuses

to respond to those substantial grants of favour the continuance of which can only be assured by our adoption of a reciprocal policy, so long will it be impossible to say that the fiscal policy of the Empire is directed to the common benefit of the Empire.

There is danger in waiting. Other nations, unhampered by any considerations of fiscal pedantry, are showing extraordinary zeal in attempting to secure what we are making no effort to retain. Arrangements have been concluded by Canada with France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, and the United States, which are in effect commercial treaties, or contain obligations not less binding than those of such treaties.

These arrangements have now produced a demand for greater freedom in the negotiation of commercial treaties by the Dominions. The Government, which would readily have acceded to this demand, finds its grant obstructed by a system of commercial treaties concluded throughout a long period of British history. The Foreign Secretary sneered not long ago at the fact that some of these treaties were negotiated and concluded during the Commonwealth, but Free Traders have always contended that British trading privileges abroad are rendered secure by the maintenance of these treaties intact. A large number of these treaties were concluded at a time when all foreign relations, even those affecting the commercial interests of the Colonies, were settled by the Home Government. There are said to be no fewer than forty-four commercial treaties the terms of which bind Canada, often without her assent having been asked or required, equally with the United Kingdom. Equally numerous are the treaties which similarly bind Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland. The decision of the Government to yield to the desire of the Dominions

for independent treaty-making powers took definite shape at the last Imperial Conference. On that occasion the Government undertook to approach the foreign countries directly concerned with a proposal to release the Dominions from the operation of the treaties. The reciprocal obligations between the Dominions and foreign countries conferred by these treaties were to cease; to be resumed later, on a different basis, as the result of direct negotiations by representatives of these Dominions. It is an adequate comment upon this procedure that, except Sweden and Morocco, no foreign country has been willing to fall in with the proposed arrangement. They at least have learned to appreciate the essential unity and integrity of the British Empire. For many years they have been granting a privileged position to British trade which, in the case of all other countries, has only been granted in return for privileges of equal value. The fact that the Dominions have been associated with us in our treaties has secured foreign countries some return, if not in our markets, at least in other parts of the Empire. But if the Dominions are to be permitted to withdraw, the portion of the treaty which would then remain would be, in the opinion of foreign nations, the conferment of obligations without any reciprocal obligation from ourselves. A unilateral arrangement of this kind could not (such is the contention) be justified in the Parliaments or to the democracies of those countries. If the power to negotiate commercial treaties is to be granted, on terms however limited, to the Dominions, that power necessarily involves as a condition of its salutary exercise the capacity to grant tariff favours ourselves in return for equal tariff favours required by us.

Many observers make the cardinal error of assuming

that there is nothing wrong with our foreign trade. They point to its growth in recent years, and especially since the Tariff Reform campaign was launched in 1903. It is undeniably true that the value of our foreign trade has shown astonishing expansion in recent years. We may answer that, though the value of our trade has increased, the volume has shown a much smaller increase. Or we may argue that, however large the British trade increase has been, the trade of the leading foreign countries, such as Germany and the United States, has increased even more. However sound these positions may be, it is not strictly relevant to the point it is desired to make here. This is that the growth of our foreign trade in recent years is not due to a growth in the total volume of production, but only to an increased dependence on foreign markets for the disposal of a larger share of the products of British workers. The position might be illustrated as follows: Ten years ago, out of every £100 of commodities produced by British labour, some £20 was exported and £80 retained. At the present time it is probable that the proportions have altered to £25 exported and £75 retained. Attention is concentrated on the export figures, because it is only in connection with this department of commerce that official returns are available. In the illustrative case cited it would appear that the export had increased in the proportion of 20 to 25 or by 25 per cent. This would take no account of the larger volume of production due to the work of an increased population. In ten years this alone would account for an increase of about 10 per cent. Hence the total increase in the volume of the export trade arising partly from the growth of population, but mainly from the greater proportion of the total product exported, would amount to 37½ per cent. This is the figure

which Free Traders flaunt in the faces of their opponents to disprove and discredit, as they allege, the contention that our foreign trade is not sound and prosperous. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to prove that trade as a whole, whether for consumption abroad or at home, has grown more prosperous. Indeed, all the available evidence suggests a different conclusion. If all were well with our trade we should not have lost 1,500,000 British citizens in the last ten years; unemployment might reasonably have been expected to be less; wages might with equal confidence have been expected to show a larger growth. These facts prove rather the soundness of the theory that the condition of British trade as a whole has not improved in recent years.

In these circumstances the increase in the export trade has a special importance. Never before has this country depended on markets abroad for the disposal of so large a share of her production. We are therefore more vulnerable to the attacks of foreign countries upon our trade. Any check to which that trade might be subjected would visit us with very serious injury. We cannot afford to have any markets closed against us. We cannot afford even to have the smallest additional barrier placed in the path of our merchants. All our efforts must be directed to make our entry into those markets easier and freer, subject to fewer restrictions and opposed by lower tariffs.

The approach to foreign Governments at the instance of the Dominions to relieve us from their treaty obligations has not been successful in securing its object, and has served only to render those nations suspicious of our intentions, and to induce a reconsideration of the equity of the treaties. We can, it is true, always denounce our existing treaties; but no foreign minister is likely in our day and under

present conditions to recommend so drastic a course. True, it would give the Dominions the opportunity they desire so much of making their own independent trading agreements. But how about our interests? Without desiring to minimise the trade of the Dominions, it must be recognised that foreign trade interests are at present more extensive than those of all the Empire combined. On what terms could we re-negotiate the treaties so as to protect the interests of the United Kingdom? Are foreign countries likely, under the altered circumstances, to grant us most-favoured-nation treatment, a privilege upon which they place a high value, and the consideration for which is a free entry into our market? The answer from those who have devoted their attention to this aspect of the question is clear. Such persons do not doubt that, unless we tie our fiscal freedom in such manner as we have already done in the last Japanese treaty, it is unlikely that new treaties would be negotiated. Most-favoured-nation treatment would be denied us. Privileges which were extended to our keenest competitors would be withheld from us. The whole of our trade would be seriously menaced.

We cannot overlook the fact that in the Dominions the desire to negotiate independent treaties is very largely the result of a desire to find new markets for their products. If by any policy of preference for Imperial products we gave them privileges they do not at present enjoy, much trade in the United Kingdom at present enjoyed by foreign countries would be diverted to the Dominions. So far as that diversion was effected, the need for new markets would be satisfied, and the demand for treaty-making powers postponed. But this postponement could only be for a time. The demand for treaty-making powers would

certainly be renewed. The conditions, however, would be different. We should then have secured a specially privileged position in the markets of the Empire and have conferred equally exceptional privileges upon Empire trade in our own market. Possessing a tariff, we could next approach foreign nations for the renewal of our treaties on terms determined by our sole interests. The Dominions would equally be able to negotiate treaties in their respective interests without risking the position of British trade. Only by the recognition of these interests and necessities is it possible to grant the legitimate demands of the Dominions without danger to broader Imperial interests.

Considerations such as these, proving the intimate connection between the policy of tariffs for securing British interests and the policy of preference for securing the interests of the Empire, have made it clear that the policy is in the truest sense Imperial. Such a policy, once adopted, would give the amplest scope for a final settlement of some of the great outstanding problems which have vexed the minds of statesmen for many years. New sources of revenue for financing further and even larger measures of social reform would be at once opened up. Poor Law reform, readjustment of the burdens of local taxation with the aid of grants from the Imperial Exchequer, housing reform both in the towns and rural districts—measures the effective settlement of which has been continually postponed because of the financial difficulty—would then approach a real solution. These are social reforms which would be a real boon to the masses of the people, and it is a tragedy that devotion to a fiscal fetish should continue to bar the way to legislation. Tariff Reformers are confident, as the result of a world-wide experience, that a tariff can be framed which would be of direct

advantage to the working classes. The regulation of imports would give greater security to our manufacturers. This result would in time lead to the investment of capital at home which would otherwise have been invested abroad. More capital invested at home would imply production in larger quantities at lower costs. We should compete more readily and on better terms in the markets abroad, and, owing to the larger output and the increased demand for labour at home, more wages would be distributed among our workers at home. This is no imaginary picture ; its reality is confirmed and corroborated, as has been said, by the universal experience of the civilised world. There is not a country where the adoption of a tariff system has not ushered in a beneficial change in the progress of the working classes. Our own dominions, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the United States, all support and illustrate this conclusion.

One of the greatest needs of the country is that attention should be given to the condition of our agriculture. The maintenance of this industry is still vital to our national interests. Our defence arrangements would be greatly simplified if we could make sure of a large home supply of food-stuffs. No Government of whatever party complexion can afford to ignore the agricultural industry. The present Government has passed a Small Holdings measure which has been singularly ineffective in fulfilling the expressed expectations of its promoters. They have promised a scheme of land banks and credit societies, which has not been carried further than the stage of promising. These attempts and promises to legislate for agriculture are at best the merest tinkering with a great question. There must be a tariff designed to help agriculture just as much as manufacturing industry. Assistance on a

large scale must be given to a policy of small holdings for occupying tenants. Credit facilities must be organised on a generous basis. Agricultural research must be undertaken by and at the expense of the State. Light railways must be encouraged, if necessary at the public charge, in rural areas where the building of railways by private enterprise is likely to prove unremunerative. A tariff is the first essential of such a comprehensive agricultural policy. With it much may be accomplished: without it nothing can be attempted.

From whatever point we approach the great questions which are agitating all political parties, Unionists and Tariff Reformers find an effective solution in the policy they advocate. It is the master-key of all Unionist activities. Labour unrest will be settled, or at least mitigated; the condition of the masses will be improved; agriculture will be restored; and the Empire will be firmly consolidated by a determined and bold policy of Tariff Reform. The next election will be of critical importance. We appeal from the House of Commons to our friends in the constituencies for that sustained help without which all our efforts are fruitless.

X

TARIFF REFORM AND OTHER MATTERS

A Speech delivered at Dudley on 20th December 1912

No one, who has been reading the papers attentively in the last few weeks, can fail to be struck by the circumstance that, whereas events of the most critical character have been happening before our eyes on the Continent of Europe, the attention of public men in this country has been almost exclusively directed to our own domestic controversies. This is not an altogether healthy sign. The quarrels, however bitter—and they are very bitter—which divide us at home, would be forgotten as if they had never existed, if, unhappily, we should find ourselves confronted by that crisis in Europe which only those who have not closely followed the progress of Continental politics in the last five years will pronounce to be impossible or even very unlikely. In what position should we find ourselves if war broke out in Europe to-morrow?

I do not inquire now whether the commitment is wise or unwise, necessary or unnecessary; and I cannot even say with authority that the commitment exists; but if we are committed to interpose by land as well as by sea to assist France, should she ever become the victim of an aggressive campaign, how far are we to-day in a position to meet this necessity?

We have our expeditionary force, second, I believe, to none, officer for officer, man for man, in the armies of the world; but how are we equipped to meet the

necessary wastage of Continental warfare in a struggle where our numbers are relatively so small in comparison with those alike of our opponents and of our allies?

I hope no one is so simple as to imagine that the weakness of our actual military position is without its effect upon the efficiency of our diplomacy. Sir Edward Grey has been the subject of much criticism, proceeding almost entirely from his own supporters. For my part, I confess that looking back upon the history of the last five years, I marvel not that Sir Edward Grey has been able to do so little, but that he has been able to effect so much. There would be no war in Europe—and I go further; I say there would be no apprehension of war in Europe—to-day, if a million English citizens had been trained in those arts of self-defence which have never been forgotten by any great country except in the period of its decay, and as an incident of its dissolution.

The whole field of Foreign Affairs has long, by common consent, been removed from the blighting area of party controversy. The same salutary process, though not so completely established, is in course of development in the treatment of naval problems. The most vital task for responsible statesmen to-day is to place the problem of our military defence in such a position that men of all political views may bring into the common stock their knowledge and their ideas in such a spirit that it would be universally realised by everyone that the attempt to exploit them for the purposes of party capital was unworthy of a patriotic Englishman. No one party can persuade the youth of this country to submit to a process of training in arms if any other party is prepared to initiate a factious and partisan opposition. Let us attempt, each according to the measure of his powers, ever to enlarge the range and area of those issues vital to the Commonwealth which

public-spirited men are determined to exclude from the battleground of politicians.

We have recently, as a party, passed through a period the serious character of which has been, in my judgment, much exaggerated. I speak a great deal in many parts of the country; and wherever I go I find none of those doubts and apprehensions which have recently been rife in the Clubs and the Lobbies. We require at the present moment both a sense of perspective and a recollection of recent history. Eight years ago Mr Chamberlain dedicated what remained of his political life to a cause which he believed, and we believed, to be vital to the permanence of the Imperial connection. We first embraced that cause in the darkest hour of the fortunes of that great party to which we all belong. The adoption of that policy, and, in a minor degree, its insistent prosecution in the months and years that followed, threatened at one time to disintegrate the party. We who believed in Tariff Reform were neither so ignorant nor so inattentive, either to history or to common-sense, as to be unaware of the difficulties which beset our path. The duties on food which in those days were advocated, would at that time have been of incalculable value to the Colonies. They told us so, and I was, and am, content to accept their decision. This was one method of carrying out our object, and we at that day knew of no other, and they knew of no other. With a full knowledge that of all the policies which it might be our duty to recommend to our fellow-countrymen, this of all others lent itself to misrepresentation and dishonest travesty in the constituencies, we made up our minds formally, deliberately, repeatedly, that we would trust the common-sense and the patriotism of our countrymen. We thought that under whatever disadvantages we might enter upon the great struggles

which lay in front of us, we should be strengthened by the correlative advantage that we were advocating what was right, whether it was popular or not, because we believed that the cause we so advocated would consolidate the Empire, and because we believed no other policy could or would do so. Having taken a decision so open to attack upon considerations of opportunism alone, we contended on its behalf with all the determination and all the persuasiveness of which we were capable. We carried on insistently a campaign which created great enthusiasms. We made friends of men who, on other subjects, were not in great sympathy with the ideals of the Conservative Party. Nor had we long to wait before the strength of the army, which had rallied in reply to our efforts, was exposed to a most searching and public test. In 1910, Mr Lloyd George introduced a Budget conceived and framed with every artifice which skilful demagogy could suggest, to attract the constituencies if he should succeed, in his own phrase, in enticing the Lords into a trap. We fought the Budget, and we fought the Land Taxes, which supplied all the rhetoric of those who defended the Budget, with one weapon, and with one weapon only. We insisted, alike in the towns and on the countryside, upon that policy of Tariff Reform on behalf of which so much missionary enterprise had been lavished in the years which had intervened since its adoption. Nor was the result discouraging to those who challenged, for the first time, in competition with a policy so specious, the verdict of the nation upon an issue which had been believed so completely dead that it had become the very type and exemplar of causes deemed to be hopelessly lost. We won more than a hundred seats; we destroyed, perhaps for all time, the Liberal Party as an independent Government; we created the Coalition, with all its shifts, all its evasions, all its dishonesty, all

its futility. We restored in large measure the strength and the prestige of the Unionist minority, and we gave it more than strength ; we gave it once again confidence, self-respect, and the consciousness of an ideal for which its members had made many sacrifices, and in front of which they saw, or thought they saw, a sure and certain hope.

The twelve months which followed necessarily involved some interruption in our campaign. The death of King Edward VII., the constitutional conference, the concentration of public attention upon the crisis which followed, and the recrudescence of class hatred, upon a scale of malignity as sinister as it was novel in our political life, presented topics which made it impossible in the Election which followed to concentrate public attention upon the subject of Tariff Reform as exclusively as we had done in the January election.

And here Mr Balfour, exercising a discretion which I approved then, and approve now, announced a decision which I am satisfied was required by the crisis then, and which, in a modified form, may not inconceivably be required by a similar crisis in the future.[1] He decided not to compromise the issues of a struggle on which the whole fabric of the Constitution depended, by offering for irrevocable decision to the constituencies an issue which could not, from the very nature of the case, be an exclusive or even a principal subject of public attention.

The result of that election is well within the memory of you all. Fighting against great odds, we none the less maintained our position ; and we have strengthened it consistently in the by-elections, until to-day we are far the largest homogeneous party in the House of Commons.

A month ago, no cloud, however small, menaced the

[1] Since this speech was made, the suggestion contained in the above sentence has been, in substance, adopted by Lord Lansdowne and Mr Bonar Law.

prospect in front of us. For the Government the handwriting was upon the wall; and the only question seemed to be, when the final blow would be delivered.

Under these circumstances Lord Lansdowne and Mr Bonar Law delivered their speeches at the Albert Hall. It would be vain to deny that they produced both doubt and heart-searching among men who thought their leaders were changing a venue undoubtedly favourable, for one which was, at least, less favourable. If tactics counted for everything in political life, this view would not lack the support of powerful arguments. But they do not; they never did, and they never will. The forgetfulness of this elementary truth betrayed the Government into the attempt which will assuredly wreck them before its consummation is complete, to carry through Home Rule without an appeal to the constituencies. We have criticised with indignation, bitterly felt and bitterly expressed, the attempt to defraud the constituencies of their right to pronounce upon great and novel policies; and we have insisted for two years that no Government is justified in forcing into law a scheme which has not been explained, both on principle and with particularity, to the constituencies.

Other men might conceal their policy until the eve of an election—conceal it still further by a perfunctory reference at the Albert Hall, and so claim that it had been submitted to and pronounced upon by the constituencies. Other men could do it; we could not, if there was either consistency, sincerity, or truthfulness left in public life.

We had, then, either to make up our minds whether at an early date we would take the constituencies into our confidence, or whether we would be guilty of the duplicity which we had censured in our opponents. Mr Bonar Law decided to adopt the straightforward course. I am only entitled to speak on behalf of those

of his colleagues who sit upon the Front Bench in the House of Commons; but on their behalf I say explicitly, and with knowledge, that if he was wrong, we were wrong with him; that if he ought to have tried tactics and evasion and craftiness, then the measure of his shortcomings is the measure of our shortcomings too. We shall win this battle upon straightforward lines, or we shall not win it at all. If the tactics were bad, we should none the less adopt them; because no other course was open to men possessing any claim to consistency. But I am profoundly convinced that the tactics were both well-considered and good. We are either right or wrong in thinking that we can persuade our countrymen of the strength of our case. If we are wrong, we shall fail, as others have failed in their advocacy of great causes. If we are right, we shall carry out our policy, and we shall found it upon a basis which will never be shifted, because we shall be strong in the support of a people whom we have freely and frankly taken into our confidence, and from whom, being fully informed, we have received an intelligent mandate.

If, then, we were to persevere at all in the policy of Tariff Reform, it was right to speak as Lord Lansdowne spoke, and it was right to speak now. The only other course which honest men could take, in the position in which we found ourselves, was to drop Tariff Reform Is anyone prepared to advocate that policy? If he is, let me tell him that his task is a double one. He must find, in the first place, new leaders, and he must find, in the second place, new followers.

I affirm confidently that the events of the last three years have strengthened immeasurably the claims which the outer Dominions, and in particular Canada, possess upon the gratitude of England, and the fidelity of the Unionist Party.

Has anyone yet forgotten the splendid bribe which the United States of America offered to Canada? Has anyone forgotten—can anyone forget—that the American people made prodigious efforts in order to obtain those advantages which we are offered for nothing, and which we have hitherto been blind enough to refuse? If you still remember how greatly Canada was tempted, and how greatly that temptation was reinforced by the indifference, and even by the positive encouragement, of the present Government, you will be in a position to appreciate, and I hope to remember, the reality of the sacrifices which Canada made for England when she sent us the message, "We stand for England, and for no other Power; we refuse what America has offered to us, not because we are blind to the material advantages of that offer, but because it would rule out, now and for ever, those closer ties with England, which are the ideal of a United Canada, and which alone promise, in permanence, a United Empire."

I can only say for myself, that just as Canada fought her battle for England, so will I, according to the poor measure of my capacity, fight my battle for Canada. The Conservative party in Canada took their lives in their hands on behalf of England, and I, for one, will not put a higher value upon my political life.

Nor does the story end there. We are beset to-day, as every schoolboy knows, by a challenge, assiduous, deliberate, and publicly proclaimed, to our maritime supremacy. We have boasted for generations, and indeed for centuries, that we rule the waves; but the last five years have witnessed a contraction, ever more marked, of that ocean area which is patrolled by the fleets of England. The menace is nearer home; and in inexorable response to its presence, we have been compelled more and more to concentrate our fleet in

home waters. But the more we so concentrate it, the more completely and publicly do we repudiate the function of a Power at once world-wide and supreme upon the sea. We have, in other words, reached a stage at which, unless we are prepared to make sacrifices upon a scale which has never been demanded of us, I say deliberately, in the most critical stages of our history, we shall be proved unable, and within the short period of a decade, to keep upon the oceans of the world such a number of powerful modern vessels as will be required by the necessities of imperial defence. The naval programmes of Germany, Austria, and Italy are growing before our eyes. The value of our pre-Dreadnought vessels is constantly dwindling. In this crisis, where so many are against us, who is it that has come to our aid? The Government of Canada are proposing to give us three first-class modern vessels, a gift which is splendid in conception, munificent in execution, but which is even more splendid and more munificent in the moral than in the material sphere. I cannot form in my mind the picture of the Canadian House of Commons on the conclusion of the debate in which the Conservative proposal was brought forward—and, let me equally add, of that on which the Liberal amendment was submitted—I cannot, I say, picture that scene without feelings of emotion for which I can find no words. Before the whole world, and against so formidable a portion of the world, they range themselves by our side, partakers of our sacrifices, our dangers, and our glories; and, forgetting party, they sing, across that vast Ocean, which no longer estranges, the anthem of prayer for the King which is the symbol of loyalty with them, as it is the symbol of loyalty with us.

And here, while this scene is fresh in our minds, while these sounds are still ringing in our ears, I ask

the question: Will any man who has fought the battle of Tariff Reform, against fierce odds, and in the teeth of envenomed faction, for so many years, choose this moment to lay aside his armour and abandon the cause? For myself, I can only say that a party so bankrupt of honour, so saturated with poltroonery, would deserve and would receive the contempt of the constituencies and the condemnation of history.

In these critical circumstances, what did Mr Bonar Law say at Ashton? He has pointed out what is evidently true: that the situation has already largely changed in the Outer Dominions since Mr Chamberlain first brought forward his proposals. He has pointed out that it would be impossible for any Government to introduce any proposals in the direction of Imperial Preference without protracted consultation with the Representatives of the Colonies. He never said, as some have supposed, that the decision would be left to the Colonies. He never proposed, and he could not propose, to abdicate the responsibility which the Government of this country will always owe to the people of this country. The importance of this Conference, and its possible effect upon the Food Duties, lies in quite other circumstances. Our object is Imperial Preference. This is the end which we have set in front of us. Only foolish people will confuse the means with the end. The very object of discussing the method of carrying out Imperial Preference with the Colonies is in order that we may be informed by them with authority what, in their judgment, is vital in order that that policy may be carried out. Some Canadians are of opinion that while the duty on wheat would have helped them enormously at the time Mr Chamberlain first proposed it, it is less vital to them to-day, and may become even less so in two years. Other Canadians,

again, are alive to the disadvantages that would follow if the working classes of this country were persuaded, however untruthfully, that the price of living had been raised for them by the incidence of duties whose object was Imperial. And there are many, both in Canada and in our other Colonies, who, without excluding from consideration the question of duties on food, have other suggestions to offer in the attempt to attain the object. Once again I repeat, the end is greater than the means. We shall not shrink from the means if the end requires it; but we shall not commit the error of subordinating the greater to the less.

Let me add a word in conclusion. I believe the views I have expressed are, in the main, those of an overwhelming majority of the Unionist Party. If there be any who do not agree, I would most respectfully, and without a vestige of ill-feeling, invite them to await the developments which the years will surely bring, rather than imperil at this moment the unity of the only instrument which can safeguard those vital national interests with the maintenance of which we are all of us equally charged. Division means disaster. If any man wishes civil war in Ulster, let him divide the party. If any man wishes to consummate the ruin, first of the Church in Wales, and then of the Church in England, let him divide the party. If any man wishes to perpetuate, in our Constitution, the Parliament Act and all that it stands for, let him divide the party.

For myself, if I disbelieved in Tariff Reform as profoundly as I believe in it, I would rather withdraw for ever from public life than lift up my voice at this crisis to disintegrate, and it may be to wreck, the only party which, in my deliberate judgment, offers the slightest guarantee for the maintenance of proprietary right, of political principle, or of Constitutional freedom.

XI

LICENSING POLICY

More than most causes, that of temperance has been the victim of exaggerated advocacy. So completely, indeed, has the fanatic dominated the movement that fanaticism and temperance reform have become almost synonymous terms. It will be well, therefore, to begin this outline of a policy of temperance reform by an effort to clear away the atmosphere of fanaticism which has made the temperance movement a byword. Such a clearance was never more necessary than to-day.

At present the very word temperance is misunderstood. I do not minimise the importance of sobriety in the consumption of intoxicating beverages, and still less the evil of insobriety, but I claim, none the less, that the word temperance is too large for the particular purpose to which it is put. And it is unfortunate that a word which means so much more than self-restraint in the drinking of certain classes of beverages should have been adopted without qualification as the name of a movement designed to serve this comparatively narrow end. Temperance itself is only one of the seven capital virtues. And, though occupying this limited portion of the field of right living, it yet comprises much more than sobriety in the use of intoxicants. It is worth noting, for example, that in the list of the

seven deadly sins the converse vice which corresponds to the virtue of temperance is not drunkenness at all, but gluttony. The evil of intemperance is excessive indulgence. This article is not a theological treatise, and so I need not pursue the subject into a detailed statement of the reasons why excessive indulgence in any natural good is harmful; but we may usefully remember that overfeeding is hardly less disgusting than overdrinking and, according to the doctors, is responsible for much more illness and death; it denotes, moreover, at least as great a weakening of the powers of self-restraint.

But the error in nomenclature is not concluded by the adoption of too wide a word. In so far as the great bulk of so-called temperance reformers are concerned, temperance is altogether the wrong word. The dictionaries tell us that temperance means moderation; the fanatical "temperance" reformers tell us that it means total abstinence; and, now that drunkenness is a waning evil, these propagandists actually declare, on the platform and in their journals, that "the fight now is against the moderate drinker." The name, therefore—never quite happy, because it necessarily narrowed a word of very wide meaning—has become grotesquely inappropriate as the label of a movement which has degenerated into a modern form of the old Manichean heresy, which regarded matter as evil—the hatred of matter among these neo-Manicheans being concentrated upon one particular substance—alcohol. It has now become necessary, not only to uphold the virtue of temperance by proclaiming the evil of excessive indulgence in fermented liquors, but to reclaim the word from those fanatics who presume to identify it with the doctrine of total abstinence, a presumption without sanction either in Christianity or in commonsense.

Extreme reformers foolishly develop their proposals

as if either they themselves were possessed of despotic powers, or as if all the world agreed with them. It is evident that neither proposition is true. Their power to rivet sumptuary laws upon their fellow citizens is, under our existing political arrangements, co-extensive with their power to persuade such persons to submit to those laws. There is very little evidence that the general body of Englishmen is either amenable to such persuasion or is becoming more patient of its alternative —coercion. The classification of mankind is old—but it is eternal—according as they are by nature severe and ascetic, or indulgent and relaxed in their standards of conduct. Each class has its strength and its corresponding weakness. The ascetic may be, and often is, intolerant and tyrannical, the "severe sour-complexioned man" of Izaak Walton. The advocate of moderate pleasures may fall into excess and debauchery. But it is incredibly stupid to ignore the strength of those who, while alive to the mischiefs of its excessive use, are wholly unimpressed by indiscriminating denunciations of alcohol. The majority of mankind is condemned to live laborious lives. Wise men of all ages, in all countries, have recognised and praised the agreeable relaxation of fatigue and care which may be gained by the moderate use of this enchanting drug. "Vino," wrote Horace in this connection, "diffugiunt mordaces curæ"; and if more respectable authority is required than that of so mundane a philosopher, the well-known eulogy of the Psalmist may once again be recalled: "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man." And, indeed, poets in all ages have celebrated this almost universal admission of mankind. In the knightly custom of Branksome Hall:

> "They carved at the meal
> With gloves of steel,
> And drank the red wine through the helmet barred."

And Hoffmann's lines have been sung in many a jocund chorus:

> "Sparkling and bright in liquid light
> Does the wine our goblets gleam in,
> With hue as red as the rosy bed
> Which a bee would choose to dream in."

What Horace said of Homer may, perhaps, be retorted upon those who write, or think (or sing) in this strain:

> "Laudibus arquitur vini vinosus Homerus."

They will probably support this taunt with as much composure as Horace himself would have exhibited, content if they have made it clear how large a section of mankind is willing to stand or fall, here or hereafter, by its own choice in moral issues, and is determined to tolerate no compulsion at the hands of those who advocate a different, and it may even be an inferior, philosophy of human conduct. Some men like music more than others; some women; some wine. Neither dogmatism nor compulsion will ever destroy disparities which, being temperamental, are as old as the human race. If temperance reformers would attempt to understand these differences of type, they would approach their self-imposed task with greater prospect of at least speaking a language which those who are regarded (according to the point of view) as their beneficiaries or their victims would understand.

I have said that the temperance movement has degenerated into fanaticism; and the statement is historically true. When it began, about a century ago, arising spontaneously, and with reason, in a state of society in which drunkenness was so widespread and constant as to be regarded merely as an amiable weakness, the propagandists of the movement went no farther than to counsel the temperate use of alcohol.

The ravages of excessive gin-drinking among the lower classes, and to some extent of brandy-drinking in the upper classes, certainly led these early reformers to advocate the entire disuse of spirits in which the intoxicating element was so potent; but they did not preach total abstinence from the fermented drinks—wines and beers; and even to this day one may find a curious survival of this old-fashioned temperance in the North of England and in Ireland among persons who will tell you that they are pledged teetotallers, and therefore only drink port wine—in Ireland, I believe, frequently adding stout. But if one is reckless enough when opportunity arises, and one's stomach is strong enough, beers and wines may be drunk to an extent which produces intoxication. In those hard-drinking days of which I am speaking, drunkenness from excessive consumption of beers and wines was prevalent, and, seeing it, the temperance reformers took a new departure, and advocated abstention from all alcoholic beverages. Here I may say parenthetically that they were not scientifically accurate; it is still only a question of degree. Just as wines contain about a third or a fourth of the alcohol to be found in spirits, and beer about a third of the alcohol in wine, so in the beverages favoured by the teetotallers, as they now began to call themselves, the alcoholic proportion was in some cases less only, not absent; ginger beer frequently contains nearly half as much alcohol as beer. So almost omnipresent, indeed, is the vilified substance, that we now know it to exist to the extent of half per cent. in new bread, and that it is owing to its presence that new bread is so peculiarly palatable.

This departure from temperance into teetotalism was the deplorable turning point of the movement. One can understand it; for the reformer is always in a hurry,

and the temperance reformer, being only human, forgot that patience is one of the dictionary synonyms of temperance. He soon also forgot all temperance of language; and, as we all know, the temperance movement rapidly degenerated into narrow fanaticism, which has become more violent rather than less violent with that dwindling of drunkenness, the diminution of which was its original object.

Extravagant speeches, and the collection of teetotal pledges from reformed drunkards, abstemious old ladies, and little children, did not long satisfy the fanatics. In all ages the reformer in a hurry has tended to develop into a persecutor. Impatience prompts recourse to the secular arm. Conversion by precept and example is a slow and uncertain process; the heavy hand of the law is much more inviting. And so the fanatical teetotaller's mind and energies were soon turned from exhortation to compulsion; he availed himself of a group of mediæval laws which had regulated public drinking at a time when the regulation of men's habits in general was regarded as peculiarly the province of the State; and upon this foundation he sought, and sought with success, to build a modern edifice of restriction upon what he called the liquor traffic. Two things made this work more easy: the public disorder which drunkenness sometimes engenders, and the State's practice of using the liquor trade as a means of revenue. So began that long list of laws—there were no fewer than 237 of them on the Statute Book at once, until Parliament codified them a year ago—the complexities of which have been the byword of lawyers and publicans, as their teeming absurdities have been the despair of lovers of liberty and commonsense.

But, though the fanatic may be regarded as the main-

spring of this legislation, as he was of the Licensing Bill of 1908, and is of the proposal for the resuscitation of that unfortunate measure, it is not wholly due to him; he would not have met with such success had he not been aided—first, by Statecraft, for reasons I have just given; secondly, by the sentimentalists, who count for so much in modern legislation; and, thirdly, by the class of legislator who regards restriction as the proper environment for the working man.

These various influences have built up what is generically known as the licensing system. The legislative feat is not one of which the nation can be very proud. In spite of the happy change in drinking habits of late years, it still leaves Britain a more drunken country than are Continental nations, where the public consumption of fermented beverages is left untrammelled by the law. And it has, under the plea—not a good plea at the best—of "reducing the facilities for drinking," turned our comfortable old inns and what should be our commodious modern refreshment houses into ugly drinking shops, whose every appointment and regulation impress upon the visitor that he enters for the disreputable purpose of gulping down the maximum amount of intoxicating liquor in the minimum time. It has produced the tied-house system, which the promoters of licensing legislation themselves denounce so vigorously; for that system has arisen solely out of the policy of restriction in the number of public-houses which began about 1869. Public-houses are the chief outlet for the products of the brewery. Relations of a more or less exclusive kind tend naturally to grow up between particular breweries and particular public-houses. It became, therefore, a matter of importance to brewers, when they saw the outlets for their productions being reduced in number, to cement the most

intimate relations possible with as many of such outlets as possible.

I have not space here, nor is it necessary, to analyse the various enactments for enforcing sobriety by Act of Parliament, or to show in detail how they have failed, and why they were almost bound to fail, of their intended effect; but I may find room to remind the reader that the closing of public-houses all day on Sundays in some parts of these islands, and for most of the day in other parts, and the earlier closing on week days, inevitably tend to foster home drinking of the more dangerous kind (one bottle of spirits being more portable than half-a-dozen bottles of beer); secret drinking; rapid drinking during the final closing hours, if they are too early for the habits of the neighbourhood; and the growth of clubs, where members and friends can drink when and as long as they choose and without the surveillance of the police. I would point out, too, that the rigid discountenancing of games and respectable social amenity in public-houses, which has been the stupid and insolent policy of the law and its administrators, has degraded the public-house, and therewith those who frequent it, by making it merely a place to drink in. Again, the restriction in the number of public-houses has not only produced the tied-house system, and such evils as may be attributed thereto, but it has encouraged drunkenness in two ways: (1) By the crowding of bars (their space already restricted by magistrates) in such public-houses as remain, the landlord's supervision of his customers becomes more difficult; no landlord is such a brute or such a fool as wittingly to serve with intoxicating liquor an already drunken man, but he cannot so easily distinguish such an one when wedged in a crowd. (2) The fewer public-houses there are in the town the more likely is a con-

vivial customer to meet a considerable number of his friends in the particular house which he enters, and be subjected by a larger number, therefore, to the temptations of treating.

And, again, let me point out that the State's fiscal policy has been almost as deplorable as it is extraordinary. It is a fair estimate to say that a quarter of the price of beer is tax in one form or another, while in the case of spirits the price is almost all tax. In the selection of a single class of merchandise for such amazingly heavy imposts the hand of fanaticism is easily detected. It is not all Statecraft, or even Statecraft degenerated into greed; and it is not all a puritanical penalty upon luxury, for other luxuries (save the cognate stimulant of tobacco) go untaxed, or are but lightly taxed. The adequate explanation can only be found in the assumption that heavy taxation will reduce heavy drinking—though it is a curious doctrine of public finance so to arrange your taxes that they shall defeat their proper object, which is the collection of revenue.

But no more futile effort to make people sober by Act of Parliament has ever been conceived than this of piling heavy imposts upon intoxicating liquors. Such imposts may and do restrict the consumption of a moderate man of small means, exercising a form of pressure difficult to justify; and they may, and probably do, force the man who is not wealthy or extravagant to drink liquors of inferior quality (and here again the result of State interference is scarcely happy); but it may be doubted whether the real drunkard drinks any less. He is so weak in his will and so strong in his passions, or is so deeply afflicted with a craving arising out of mental or physical disease, that he is ready, in order to obtain drink, to make the deplorable sacrifices which the

teetotal rhetoricians depict in colours so vivid. He is going to have his drink, whatever it costs; and the more it costs the less money will be available for the necessities of his home. When teetotal orators draw harrowing pictures of ruined homes and starving children through drink, they forget to put some of the blame upon the shoulders of the State and those who have induced the State to make drink of the better quality so irrationally dear.

From the standpoint, therefore, of sobriety in drink our licensing system, and the whole policy underlying it, have singularly failed; what progress has been made in recent years towards temperance has been made, I say deliberately, in spite of so-called temperance legislation and the licensing system. A simple test will prove this: Where did the movement towards temperance begin? It began among those classes of society whose members do not use the public-house, and who, except in rare cases, have not been touched by the teetotal propaganda, which has been confined to the working and lower middle classes. The movement has filtered down from the gentleman to the working man, as other movements and fashions, good and bad, have the habit of doing in this country. Neither the administrators of teetotal pledges nor the builders or administrators of licensing laws can claim any credit for the improvement which has been achieved; whereas it may well be argued that a stupid licensing system has retarded the improvement.

But we must avoid falling into the pit which most teetotal propagandists have dug for themselves—that is, of regarding sobriety in the use of fermented beverages as the one virtue worth troubling about. That is the way most heresies have arisen—by confining oneself to one particular doctrine or aspect of the doctrine, per-

fectly true in itself, but becoming monstrously untrue when taken out of its setting and regarded exclusively. There are other things of capital importance to our well-being besides temperance in drink. Let me name two: freedom, and the building up of character, for which a large measure of freedom is essential. Living in society, a man's freedom to do exactly as he chooses must necessarily be curtailed in some directions. It must be curtailed when he would do something which would injure or oppress his neighbours. That is a condition, indeed, of the freedom which those neighbours are entitled to enjoy equally with himself. But, outside certain obviously necessary limitations of personal freedom, we ought to proceed with the utmost caution, and only the strongest case will support interference. It is desirable that men should neither become chronic drunkards nor make a public exhibition of occasional intoxication. Most men in most ages and countries are temperate enough, but there is always a minority, of varying size but usually small, of men addicted to drunkenness; and it is evidently desirable that they should be weaned from this vice. But when, in order that the few may be gathered from the burning, proposals are brought forward for State restriction of the habits and liberties of the whole population, the vast majority of which is in no need of them, restrictions which entail inconvenience and, worse still, must necessarily act upon individual character as the tying up of an arm would act upon the muscles of that arm—then, even if it could be proved that the proposed restrictions would achieve their purpose of sobering the drunken few, would it not be paid for too dearly? Evil as drunkenness is, the absence of it is no virtue when it is produced by *vis major*; the excellent moral conduct of a prisoner is hardly a virtue demanding special eulogy.

To abolish by human force the divinely appointed area in which human free will is designed to operate is an act of blasphemy which in the early days of Christianity, in connection with an analogous and interesting subject, to which more detailed reference need not be made, was condemned by the Church. Admirably, therefore, as well as boldly, did a prelate of the Anglican Church declare some years ago, "Better England free than England sober." And here we have the final condemnation of teetotal legislation.

"Better free than sober"—but best of all, free and sober. And that is the condition, as the Licensing and Criminal Statistics show, which we are now approaching. The question is how to help forward that object. In other words, what is the true line of temperance reform? For some years I have been convinced, and my conviction grows in strength, that the true line is to be found mainly in the transformation of the public-house. The public-house is a social necessity. It is, and has long been, not only the place of refreshment for the wayfarer, but the combined club, cellar, and dining-room of the working classes. And instead of being a diminishing necessity, as the State closing of alleged superfluous public-houses would seem to indicate, it is becoming an increasing social necessity; other classes of society, even the most wealthy, are now appreciating the necessity, or at any rate the desirability, of obtaining refreshment and amusement and giving entertainment in public places designed for the purpose, instead of in their own homes. There should therefore be no question of abolishing the public-house. Our sole aim should be to transform it, in accordance with our best practicable ideals.

Let me sketch my own. The ideal public-house would be, allowing, of course, plenty of scope for local

variations, a commodious and decent building, into which any passer-by might enter and call for any reasonable kind of refreshment—food or drink, the latter alcoholic or non-alcoholic. He should be able to consume these refreshments comfortably seated in a room well lit, warmed, and ventilated. He should be able not only to smoke, but if he chose, to obtain the materials for smoking also on the premises. The place should be so reputable that, whatever his social position, he could enter it openly, and even take his wife and children with him and find suitable refreshment there for them. If he were alone he should be able to call for or purchase in the house newspapers and magazines. If he had any business to transact there should be a telephone on the premises for his use. If he had one or more friends, and the party desired amusement other than conversation, they should be able to call for cards, chess or dominoes, or quoits and bowls in the country. Or, if they desired more passive amusement, there should be music to listen to. The humblest inn could provide an hour or two a day of piano playing; the richer—the large houses in wealthy towns — could furnish a small orchestra and, perhaps, a vocalist. And there is no reason why dancing should not be permitted under due guarantees of respectability. This is the ideal public-house. Such a house as this would add to the innocent enjoyment of the people, and would be an incentive to temperance and good order. No one would misbehave himself in such surroundings by drinking to excess, or by any other form of disorder; public opinion would make such conduct impossible. Upon young people of the working and lower middle classes such a house would exercise a positive influence for good. It would improve their manners, and might improve their morals. They would be better in such a house than

in prowling streets and lanes at night; and they would avoid that boredom which is the fruitful parent of all kinds of mischief.

Can this ideal be realised? It evidently can. There are difficulties in the way, of course. Has any great reform ever been free from difficulties? But of this I am convinced—that the difficulties in the way of the transformation of the public-house on the lines I have indicated are not insuperable.

Take the obvious practical difficulty which has been alleged—the difficulty of bringing up to a definite standard the many thousands of public-houses up and down the country which to-day not only deviate deplorably from the ideal type, but vary among themselves and in reference to the requirements they have to serve. The answer to this difficulty is that when one speaks of the ideal public-house one is gathering up into a picture a number of qualities to indicate the general type. But there will be particular types; and it is not proposed that all public-houses should conform to exactly the same standard. Let me illustrate by one or two examples.

Take first the commodious, well-appointed house in London or the near suburbs or one of the larger provincial towns—the house which tradesmen, clerks, men of business generally, and the smaller professional men now frequent in the evening, to chat over a glass of whisky and perhaps play a game of billiards. Many of these houses have been vastly improved already in recent years, and the task of converting them into ideal public-houses would not entail very serious structural or decorative changes. The bars would be removed, or reduced to a mere service bar in a corner of the establishment; tables and easy-chairs and a small bandstand would occupy the vacant space; a newspaper

kiosk could be installed in one corner, and a counter for the sale of confectionery and tobacco in another; an adjoining small room would do for the telephone, and another room could be fitted with writing-tables. And, just as to-day divisions are made between the various bars, so some sort of partition could be put up in the main hall to fence off the serious diners from those who only want light refreshment. Where possible a conservatory should be thrown out, to give an air of lightness and coolness and to add to the pleasant and picturesque appearance of the house; and the floor would be carpeted with matting and rugs. There would be a sufficient display of programmes, setting forth the daily fare of all edibles and beverages (with prices), as well as of the music to be performed in the afternoon or evening. In most of such houses as are now contemplated it would also be practicable and desirable to provide an adjoining room where women, alone or with children, could go if they preferred it. One could instance further details, but enough has been said to indicate the transformation which could be wrought in the better-class town or suburban public-house.

But the town public-house frequented by poorer folk is even more in need of transformation. The change is not quite so easy, but it is not impossible of attainment when allowance is made for the fact that the full programme of accessories such as have been outlined in the previous paragraph would not be expected with this class of house. It is all a matter of degree.. The varieties of refreshment and entertainment and decoration would be on a simpler scale — that is all. The class of customers in Whitechapel would not want (and would not pay for) such luxurious service as would be expected in Hampstead. Yet, in spite of comparative simplicity,

the change would be greater than in the case of the class of house previously referred to. The light and warmth of the public-house as it is to-day in the poorer quarters of towns would be retained; but, by the abolition of the stuffy compartment system and the big space-destroying bars, fresher air would be secured, and the additional space would diminish crowding and allow a sufficiency of comfortable seats; while inexpensive but clean and simple, well-cooked, and appetising food would furnish a welcome alternative to the monotonous pots of beer. These and the like alterations (which in most cases could be achieved without structural extensions) would transform the average poor man's public-house out of recognition, and he and his womenfolk would quickly respond to the new conditions and improve their own appearance and manners to accord therewith. In this class of house, above all, the opportunity of resting in comfort, playing a game of draughts or dominoes, hearing the popular songs and dances on a piano and violin, eating decently cooked meals, reading a newspaper or writing a letter, would be appreciated; and the popularity of the new style of house would stimulate licensees to compete with each other in adding such comforts, adornments, and entertainments as their ingenuity could suggest, or their means afford.

A third type of house may be mentioned—the village inn. The same character of improvement would not be wanted here as in town public-houses, but the opportunities of advancement are almost equally great. More often than not the village inn has some ground attached which could be utilised for bowls, and other games, or a miniature rifle gallery, a dancing lawn, or an *al fresco* concert place. At the least, comfortable chairs and settees and small tables could be provided for the

patronage of the public in fine weather. As to the interior, in many village inns this is picturesque enough now, and would need little more than a brightening up on lines which would be harmonious with the character of an old hostelry. A common fault at present with many of these places is that space is rather cramped in them, but the abolition of a bar, and the opening out of two or three small rooms into one large room, would usually remove this difficulty ; and building out, when necessary, would not be a serious operation in a village. Where the house was of sufficient importance the adjoining courtyard could be roofed in with glass, and be floored with tiles, as I have seen done with excellent results in a Norfolk hotel.

Such attractions as musical entertainment would, of course, be both simpler and less frequent in the village than in the town, but some provision could be made for them, and they would be even more appreciated than in the town. The traveller would heartily welcome such a haven of refreshment; but the village resident, for whom it would chiefly exist, would enjoy it quite as much ; for it would brighten up and dispel the monotony of village life, and the mechanical manufacture of lethargic village topers would soon die out. In the right situation — the green, or the outskirts of the village street—and with the right type of licensee, the village inn could easily develop into one of the most charming features of English rural life.

There is no doubt of the practicability of this much to be desired transformation of the public-house. There is no doubt, either, of the popularity which would await it: Continental experience, and initial experiments at home, alike demonstrate this. All that is wanted to start the transformation is the awakening of public interest, the diversion of misplaced and mis-

called "temperance" sentiment, a broader view on licensing benches, the removal of a few useless restrictions from the Statute Book, a change in the methods and extent of taxation, and an end of confiscatory attacks upon the trade to whose enterprise the carrying out of the improvements will necessarily be entrusted. For we must not forget that the transformation would involve the owners of public-houses in some capital outlay, and though the actual work of improvement must be left to voluntary enterprise, the State can and ought to do something; it can ease the fiscal burden for the purpose of encouraging enterprise and enabling the needed capital to be raised, and it can overhaul, and largely eliminate from the Statute Book, the restrictions which in times past it has imposed, and which, with the change in the character of the tavern, will become more than ever unnecessary and harmful. So much, indeed, will be only an act of reparation which the State owes to the public and the publican for its past foolishness; but in doing this rather negative work the State will, for the first time in its licensing history, be really taking a part in true temperance reform.

XII

INDUSTRIAL UNREST

The public mind is now accustomed to regard industrial trouble not as a temporary inconvenience or the sensation of a day, but as a recurrent factor in our social life.

After the Transport Workers' and Railwaymen's strike of last summer came the coal strike, and hardly was the coal strike over when the Dockers and Transport Workers came out again. In a word, we are face to face with a new phenomenon, and any Government or any party which may become a Government must be prepared with a real solution of new difficulties. This thought is in the mind of every man. It has found an echo in the press, where column after column has been given up to the speculations or the dogmatism of writers urging their panaceas to meet the public ailments. The minimum wage, co-partnership, the maintenance of the *status quo ante*, Syndicalism, Socialism, or strong Government, tumble over each other as rival cures for what is admitted to be a common disease. Wisdom, as the Bible reminds us, does not generally proceed from a multitude of counsellors, nor is the sensational press the best guide towards the formation of a sound and stable public opinion. Things born of the day perish with the

day: statesmanship must throw its roots into the deeper soil of existing and probably permanent realities. None the less, discussion has done good, even if it has darkened counsel for the moment. The articulation of new opinions has been of effect in so far as it has uprooted superstitions which, though long dead, still obstinately cumber the ground, and has left a free pathway for modern constructive methods. The site has been cleared — there remains the question: What is to be built upon it?

It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that it is impossible that Conservatism should have a merely negative policy of non-interference in industrial matters. Conservatism may find itself in office in the course of the next few years, and no Government would be allowed, even if it was inclined, to view with indifference a series of strikes and lock-outs which affected vitally the well-being of the nation. A party must make up its mind, before it possesses the responsibilities of power, in what general direction it would exercise the power which the electorate may confer upon it. To act otherwise is to follow the example of Liberal Ministers, and to make democratic government a farce. Toryism, to adopt a phraseology still true even if it is thirty years old, stands for the people, while Radicalism stands for the Caucus and the Coalition. The Unionist Party will have to deal with labour unrest, and while in opposition it ought to give serious attention to the cause of the evil and to possible methods of cure.

There is indeed only one set of circumstances which might seem, wrongly enough, to relieve the next Government of its responsibility. Labour began by believing in the Parliamentary method: it has been utterly deceived in its hopes by the ludicrous incapacity of the Labour leaders. Since 1906 the so-called Labour

Members have neglected their whole duty to their constituents and have been content, at a price usually unpaid, to be bound to the wheels of the Liberal and Coalition Cabinet. Even the class loyalty of the labour organisations could not bear up against these perpetual accommodations between Liberalism and Labour. As a consequence, the Labour Party has been thrust aside in recent industrial disputes and treated as nothing but the lynch-pin on the wheel. A new set of leaders has arisen; Mr Ramsay Macdonald meekly takes his orders from them, and reproduces his instructions in the House of Commons in accents of becoming humility. But the new leaders have so far failed as badly as the old. They told their followers that there was nothing in the Parliamentary method, and their followers believed them. They told their followers that the general and Syndicalist or irritating strike was the real road to power, and their followers believed them until the results of the railway and the coal strikes proved to them that it was not so easy to dominate or terrorise society. The result is that the new leaders are as badly off as the old. Both sections have lost the confidence of Labour, while our industrial and commercial life has sustained a serious blow.

But there is a further possible consequence: if the Parliamentary leaders have lost credit, the Syndicalist leaders have lost cash. Labour may find itself bankrupt, both in its belief in the efficacy of constitutional proceedings and in the power of expressing its view through the method of strike. If there is reality in the grievances of the working classes, the next Unionist administration might find itself faced by a weakened Labour Party, by Trade Unions with funds indeed depleted and supporters who would not strike on any terms, but also by a blind spirit of revolt which

could only express itself through purely revolutionary channels. No supporter of constitutional government could view such a position without the gravest anxiety. To the apostles of class hatred all things are possible: to those who believe in a united people, the failure of both old and new methods of labour agitation brings with it the certainty of national tragedy. In any case, then, Unionism will have to deal with the problem of unrest. For the absence of strikes will not indicate the existence of industrial content. Whatever may be brought forth by the future, the problem has to be faced. Society cannot be left at the mercy of the strikers in necessary services, nor can those strikers be left absolutely dependent on the fact that the Government must carry on the affairs of the nation under any circumstances and at whatever cost. Liberalism has failed to meet the situation for two vital reasons. In the first place, it has never been able to take a line independent of the support of the Labour Party. In the second place, its whole creed is by reason of its basis unable to grasp the actualities of the industrial situation. The formulas of Liberalism may not be broken, yet nothing but the shattering of the Cobdenite idol can place society and industry on a sound basis. As in the case of nearly every other problem of social economy, the ultimate solution is left to the next Tory Government. What, then, are the broad facts of the situation which a year's industrial unrest has revealed, and what is the remedy for the trouble? The facts are fairly plain. In the first place, Free Trade and Cobdenite industrialism have brought to the country nothing but high prices, stationary wages, and a very large ratio of unemployment. These facts are in themselves sufficient to account for a very considerable and a very reasonable amount of discontent

among the working classes. In the second place, the general growth of luxury on the one side, and the class hatred stirred up by interested politicians on the other, have stirred up dormant possibilities of trouble and blown the embers of discontent into a flame. Lastly, as I have pointed out before, the belief in Parliamentary action has died with the sycophancy of the Labour Party, and Labour hopes have turned towards the more violent spirits of the party. Yet even these desperate hopes seem already doomed to disappointment. Society has so far proved too strong for the Syndicalists, and will always prove so, as long as public order is maintained. Indeed, Society must beat Syndicalism, because the failure to do so means nothing but the dissolution of Society. No nation commits suicide readily, and if Syndicalist attempts at a general strike were pushed to their logical conclusion only one or two things could happen: either the strikers would become the masters of the nation, or the nation would assert itself in a drastic fashion by organising itself against the dominance of a particular industrial clique.

The foremost factor, then, in the difficulty is the relation between wages and prices, and for this difficulty a Free Trade Government can produce no cure, except in those few industries that enjoy a natural monopoly. There is a limit, and a limit soon reached, beyond which it is impossible to raise wages against foreign competition; but as I have already suggested, this circumstance is of itself not sufficient to explain the intensity and the bitterness with which the pretensions of labour have been put forward in the last five years. A further explanation is undoubtedly to be found in the history and the commitments of the Liberal Government since 1906. The matter began even a little earlier, when the present Lord Gladstone as Chief Liberal Whip

surrendered so many safe Liberal seats to Labour candidates, who would never have entered the Chamber at Westminster on a three-cornered fight. The permanent result of these concessions was to make it impossible for the Liberal Party thereafter, except in such a land-slide as that of 1906, to command an independent majority in the House of Commons. The incidental consequence was to subordinate on many points of industrial and economic principle the practice of the Liberal Party to the crude and ill-assimilated theories of the Labour Party. In two principal ways and in many less important, the present Government have created, and are directly responsible for, strikes which have brought irreparable disaster to many small households. Their responsibility began with the passage into law of the Trades Disputes Act. I myself represent in Parliament a very large working-class constituency, and I shall always recall with pleasure that even in the critical election of 1906, appealing as it was my fortune to appeal to thousands of Trade Unionists, I refused positively and point blank to give any support to the Trades Disputes Bill. Mr Asquith and Lord Haldane had made emphatic speeches in the same sense. Lord Haldane boastfully announced that he would never toe Mr Keir Hardie's line, and Mr Asquith, in language more dignified but not less precise, indicated what purported to be a final refusal to accept the principles of this revolutionary Bill. The new Parliament met: the Attorney-General, Sir John Lawson Walton, in a speech to which he had evidently given verbal preparation, and speaking on behalf of the Government of which Mr Asquith and Lord Haldane were conspicuous members, proposed a solution wholly inconsistent with the Labour ideal. A revolt, swift and resolute, and by no means limited to

the Labour benches, followed, and Mr Asquith, who had up to that time been reckoned a politician of fibre and stamina, was guilty of the first act of pusillanimous weakness in his career. In a speech of prolix confusion Lord Haldane announced his readiness to toe the line he had abjured. The Labour Party received a charter which is wholly inconsistent with the obligations of any great and wealthy corporation in any civilised State. Trade Unions notoriously possess powers for evil not less conspicuous than their powers for good. There are few offences known to the law of torts of which they may not in theory be guilty, and they have from time to time committed some of the gravest. A Liberal Government consecrated by the solemnity of law the claim, abhorrent to the jurisprudence of any civilised country, that wealthy corporations may deliberately plan and execute illegal acts without thereby rendering their funds liable to compensate in damages the party injured by calculated illegality. Henceforward why should any Trade Union abstain from tortious acts? Why should any Trade Union keep its contracts? Why should any Trade Union abstain from conspiracy to procure a breach of contract? The accumulated experience of centuries has found it necessary in recognition of the weaknesses of human nature to penalise acts injurious to the body politic by penalties—

Jura inventa metu injusti fateare necesse est.

The Liberal Government, for reasons unexplained and inexplicable, has discovered in the men who control modern Trade Unions virtues so rare as to deserve or require an immunity from the consequences of civil offences which no civilised society has ever conceded to any individual or any corporation. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum.* It was a small step compared with this to

legalise peaceful picketing. I remember saying in the course of the debate on the second reading of the Trades Disputes Bill, No. 2, on 30th March 1906: "Every honest man knows why Trade Unions insist on the right to a strong numerical picket: it is because they rely for their objects neither on peacefulness nor persuasion. They understand with great precision their own objects, and their own interests, and they are not in the least likely to be persuaded by the representatives of Trade Unions with different objects and different interests. But though arguments may never persuade them, numbers may easily intimidate them. And it is just because argument has failed and intimidation has succeeded that the Labour Party insists upon its right to a picket unlimited in respect of numbers."

It is interesting to recall the reassurances with which these arguments were met on the Labour benches. No illegality was contemplated, none would be tolerated by responsible Labour leaders. The events of the transport workers' and of the railway strike furnish an ironical commentary on these claims. The passage, in spite of warning, of the peaceful picketing clause authorised the Labour Party, with complete immunity from the consequences of their acts, to apply those methods of intimidation and lawlessness which have excited the reprobation of the whole press of the country during the struggles of the last two years. One of the fundamental difficulties to-day in making any arrangement between Capital and Labour is that Labour, while insistently holding Capital to the word and the spirit of their mutual compact, holds itself free to break any inconvenient arrangement at any moment it thinks proper; and that it can do so with complete pecuniary impunity. The coal-miners declared a general strike in flagrant breach of their obligations.

It was announced in the papers that the men were going into the strike in a holiday spirit. They could afford to do so; to them it was apparently immaterial what loss their breach of contract might occasion to their employers, or to others who in the complex ramifications of modern commerce had entered upon commitments on the strength of coal-owners continuing to discharge their obligation to supply coal. None of these things mattered to the coal-miners. Their funds, rendered immune from action, were available as long as they lasted for their support. They are permitted by Act of Parliament to violate the law and then live upon the money which should be liable to meet the pecuniary claims of those who suffer by their illegality. If five or ten men desire to exercise the common law right of Englishmen to earn their living, one hundred hooligans are empowered by the Trades Disputes Act to coerce them into idleness. How fully this power is used is abundantly shown by recent events.

But the Trades Disputes Act did not merely mark the commencement of Mr Asquith's downward grade, nor did it represent the last act of complicity of the present Government in the unbridled licence of the Labour movement. The Trades Disputes Act planted; political propaganda watered. The whole Budget campaign, as conducted upon the platform by Mr Lloyd George and by inferior performers, was a wicked orgy of class hatred. No responsible Minister in the whole history of English politics has ever so deliberately set himself for party purposes to inculcate the sinister passions of envy, hatred, malice, and discontent. His speeches were pure Jacobinism. Why, he asked, should one man inhabit three lordly palaces whilst another lives in a hovel unfit for human habitation? The working classes, not knowing Mr Lloyd

George as we in the House of Commons know him, took his platform rhetoric at its face value. Many of them really believed that the People's Budget would remedy the state of affairs against which an invective, otherwise as irrelevant as it was mischievous, was directed. No one who went through that electioneering campaign will ever forget the impression gathered in the great industrial centres of population that for the first time feelings of vile and dangerous rancour had been excited in the artisan classes. It is much easier to excite than to exorcise the spirit of class hatred. The speeches of Limehouse and Newcastle did their work. The spectre of bitterness and discontent excited by those speeches has survived the purpose of the orator. The hounds have been blooded, and to men who had drunk freely of the wine of the platform campaign, the fruits of the Budget when it was carried have been, as every sane man predicted at the time, tame, insipid, and disappointing. The country has been striking ever since Mr Lloyd George gave them the measure which, like its more pallid successors, the Insurance Act and the Land Campaign, was to be the panacea for every human ill. The language used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and tolerated without protest by Mr Asquith, shares with the Trades Disputes Act the responsibility for the spirit of unrest which by singular irony of political Nemesis is not unlikely to wreck the Government.

The full appreciation of these circumstances has been somewhat obscured by the desperate attempts which Ministers have made to atone for the natural and inevitable consequences of their deeds. Conciliation Boards have been set up, tribunals of arbitration appointed; Sir George Askwith, a very tactful and acceptable conciliator, has been sent to intervene in every industrial

controversy. In many cases he has met with a temporary success, but the circumstances only rendered possible palliative and not curative measures. Working under these limitations he has been extremely successful, but neither he nor anyone else can permanently deal by such methods with the position as it exists to-day.

Whatever the proportions in which the spirit of Limehouse, or stationary wages, have contributed to the existing condition of the industrial world, that condition itself is a fact, and it requires both diagnosis and treatment. As I said before, Society has for the moment beaten Syndicalism; but that victory would prove a barren and indeed a costly one, if Society took no further steps to remove as far as possible the cause of the evil and to protect itself in the future against the resurgence of this malignant activity.

Matters have come to an impasse. The working classes feel, not without justification, that they are, under modern conditions, not getting their legitimate share of an increasing national prosperity, while at the same time their attempts either in the political or industrial sphere of action to assert themselves have proved a costly failure. On the other hand, society as a whole is bewildered and irritated by a perpetual succession of strikes—the reasons for which are difficult to understand—which are bound to fail so long as the social order stands, and which are both irritant and ineffective. The new type of strike damages the community without raising wages or improving conditions: it fines the trades to the extent of millions: it does no good to the workman.

Under these conditions the public mind is rapidly advancing towards the view that a new method must be tried, at least as far as the necessary services are concerned. The community will never permit itself

to be starved into submission by a comparatively small class of individuals. It will and must organise itself and fight to the death against this particular species of industrial blackmail. It will in the last resort utilise the Navy to unload vessels, the Army to run the railway food supplies, and civilian special constables, as in the time of the Gordon riots, to maintain public order where the official police are insufficient for the task. Yet such a course of procedure, however necessary, is obviously unfair to the workers in the necessary services. For on the one hand you make, as matters now stand, no special provision for them as an essential element in the management of the State, while on the other hand you take from them in effect the power to enforce their grievances in the form of a strike. The strike is the ordinary and legitimate method of attempting to secure an improvement in the condition of the workers. But the strike must be broken by the Government itself in the case of the necessary services. Any Government which was ready to put its foot down could break such a strike, and no Unionist Home Secretary could or would hesitate for a moment to take a course which would preserve the community at the expense of the strikers. We are not going to let England starve because the dockers are dissatisfied with their conditions. Forty millions of people cannot be sacrificed to the views or necessities of a single million.

But any Government which takes this view, as I think all Governments must, is bound to consider the other side of the case. It cannot break a strike without considering the interest of the strikers. In other words, if the work of the men employed in the certain services is necessary to society, society is bound to give to those men a special degree of consideration. If the Home

Secretary deprives them in effect of their most powerful weapon, he is morally responsible for their general welfare. The community must be fed, but the people who transmit the food supplies ought not to suffer because their services are essential. The State cannot agree to sweat workers because the nation cannot get on without their work. There is only one way out of the difficulty. The Government must be prepared to insure reasonable conditions of pay as far as the workers in the necessary services are concerned, and in return it must enforce the most stringent provisions against striking in those services. The proposition is obviously a fair one. An impartial board would decide the rates of payment on the understanding that the payment admits of reasonable conditions of living and can be reasonably borne by the profits of the industry. Such a decision gives to the worker all that he could hope to obtain by the method of the strike. On the other hand, it prevents the striker using his special and privileged position for the purpose of holding up the community as a whole to ransom. Liberalism can never accept such a proposal because it involves compulsory arbitration, and to compulsory arbitration the Labour Party will never agree. There is no reason why Toryism should not insist on a scheme which is just in essence and which safeguards both the interests of the State and the rights of the worker. Toryism is the party of the State—Radicalism is the party of the sections. Toryism places the good of the nation above all other considerations—Radicalism is always ready to uphold a dissident element against the national interest.

But when one has laid down this doctrine one has still to carry it into effect.

Indeed, in embarking on a form of legislation new

in this country the greatest caution is necessary. The alternatives for and against the attempt will have to be weighed with the utmost care, and the particular character and scope of the proposal must be given the most minute attention. None the less, when all this has been done, I believe that within a comparatively short period of time public opinion will move irresistibly in favour of legislation of the kind which I have suggested.

We should not, of course, be required to act without the aid of a considerable body of precedent and experience. Apart altogether from foreign legislation, there exists a whole range of statutes dealing with this particular problem in our various Dominions. For some twenty years the Governments of Australia and New Zealand have been trying to cure their industrial troubles by the appointment of Industrial Courts and Conciliation Boards, with more or less drastic powers of enforcing their awards by law, and of fining or imprisoning employers and workmen who disregard their decisions. Here, again, it would be easy to press a process of reasoning by analogy too far. It does not follow that what has failed in New Zealand would fail in London, nor that what has succeeded in Australia would suit the conditions of Liverpool. A large discount must be taken off in all such comparisons to allow for the difference of local conditions. Yet, when all this has been said and all allowances made, certain broad facts require consideration and may yield instruction.

Large communities of our own blood, possessed of political and legal institutions and arrangements closely resembling our own, and built, in most cases, on an industrial civilisation as complex as ours, if narrower in range, have attempted effectually or ineffectually to

advance on lines not dissimilar to those which I am suggesting for the consideration of the Unionist Party and the public. However great the local variants, there must be between us and them a vast amount of common ground, and their experience cannot fail to be of value to us when we face new difficulties in a region of industry and politics which Great Britain has not yet explored.

It would be tiresome and unnecessary to recapitulate in detail all the various industrial legislation of the Australian States and of New Zealand, or indeed of Canada and South Africa. The whole body of colonial legislation bears upon it the imprint of a common method and idea. The machinery may differ here and there, the extent to which compulsion is applied may be great or small, but everywhere one finds the trace of a single root conception. It is that the only condition which gives the Government the right to declare a strike or lock-out illegal is the assertion of the power to try the merits of the case by a tribunal appointed by the State. This connection between trial and sentence runs through the whole volume of Antipodean statutes, and necessarily so. As I have already pointed out, the State cannot break or put down a strike unless it is ready to assume the position of arbiter. Even the least stringent of the industrial codes, such as those of Canada and New Zealand, recognise this general rule. The laws of these countries do not, indeed, make the award of the impartial authority absolutely binding on the contestants, but they do declare any strike or lock-out illegal until the decision of the court has been given. The more stern provisions of the New South Wales and Commonwealth code make resistance to the award an offence against the law.

A broad sketch, then, of these various enactments

will leave us with a sufficiently clear impression both of the legislative intention and of the legal procedure, which in the first case lies behind them, and in the second place accompanies their application. First of all comes the Industrial Court, which consists of a judge and such assessors as he may choose to summon. The original conception was that such a court was to try all cases of dispute. It still remains the ultimate authority as a Court of Appeal, and the Government can only take action on its advice. Gradually, however, it was discovered that such a court was not the most effective tribunal for trying the cases which came before it, and of late years a strong tendency has grown up to substitute Boards of Conciliation drawn from the ranks of both disputants and under an agreed or an impartial chairman. The Boards set up after the Coal Strike are, perhaps, the nearest analogy we possess, with one very marked distinction — the powers of enforcing the award on both parties. The court can, in most cases, intervene directly or through its appointed Conciliation Board even without the application of one of the parties to the dispute. The Board then sits and gives its award, which is in some cases of a voluntary, and in others of a compulsory, character. In the compulsory cases very wide powers are conferred on the State for the purpose of enforcing the Board's decision, and the weapons of fine and imprisonment can be used against both employer and men. As there is no Trades Disputes Act in Australia, the funds of the Trade Union can be made liable for the purposes of a fine, while the individual employer or workman is also liable in his own person. Stringent clauses are generally inserted for applying penalties to those who incite either to a strike or to a lock-out in defiance or in anticipation of the award; and in the case of the

"necessary services" these penalties are particularly severe.

The distinction between the ordinary and the necessary services is not indeed so marked in Australia as I have endeavoured to suggest that it might be made in the case of the United Kingdom. The reasons for this are numerous. In the first place, in Australia a far larger proportion of the necessary services, such as railways, are under the direct control of the Government, and the civil servants who man them are then under some special Act. In the second place, the existence of the tariff in Australia makes the two cases quite distinct.

In the United Kingdom the railway, the transport, and to a great extent the coal-mining services are practically a national monopoly. They cannot be suddenly destroyed by a blast of foreign competition if too great a burden is placed upon them. In these cases, where conditions are to a large extent fixed, it should not be impossible to arrive at a compromise which includes a reasonable profit to the investor, a decent wage to the worker, and an absolute prohibition to strike except under severe financial penalties. But the position of other British industries is, so long as Free Trade lasts, fundamentally different. Not only have they no monopoly, they have not even a fair chance. No court would really be in a position to say whether a compulsory award might not produce an invasion of cheaper foreign goods and so destroy trade, employer, and workmen in one fell swoop. You can never get a British standard of living set up in this country so long as you adhere to Free Trade, and no one but a fool, a Labour member, or a Cabinet Minister, will pretend that you can. This fact has been recognised in the admirable working of the Trade Boards, the only

boards for fixing wages which have existed for any length of time in this country, and of which the inception was mainly due to the zeal and energy of Lord Milner. The Trade Boards have in effect been obliged to confine themselves in fixing wages to those sweated industries which are not subject to foreign competition. To take any other course would merely mean wiping out the industry concerned. For these reasons industrial unrest outside the necessary services can never be dealt with under a Free Trade regime, nor, indeed, does the case for dealing with them press so urgently upon the community as does the case for dealing with the necessary services. An engineering strike chiefly affects those people who are concerned with that particular trade: a railway strike affects the whole nation. In any case, I believe it will be far wiser to concentrate one's attention on these national services and to deal with them first. If compulsory arbitration proved a legislative success, the case for extending its operation to other trades would obviously be strengthened.

Australia, however, with her tariff, has not suffered from our particular limitations in this respect. She has been free to extend her industrial legislation over the whole sphere of her industry. It must be of the highest importance to this country to ascertain how far that legislation has worked successfully in practice, and how far it might, in a modified form, be applied to the industrial conditions prevailing here. It will be easiest, in order to form an opinion on the first point, to take a specific instance. New South Wales possesses the most complete and drastic compulsory Arbitration Act of all the Australian States, and that Act has in one form or another been in operation long enough to enable us to form a conclusion as to its merits. The provisions of

the Acts of 1901 and 1908 in New South Wales are not dissimilar to those I have outlined in my general survey of Australian legislation. They contain, however, the strongest provisions against strikes and lock-outs existent in the British Empire.

The general aim of the Act of 1908, which is merely a strengthened version of that of 1901, is defined as follows—"To provide for the constitution of Boards to determine the conditions of employment in industries; to define the powers of jurisdiction and procedure of such Boards, and to give effect to their awards and to appoint a court to prohibit lock-outs and strikes; to preserve certain awards, orders, directions, and industrial agreements."

The Industrial Court may, on its own discretion, form a Board to investigate a dispute without any application by the interested parties, and an appeal to it also lies from the decision of the Board. Once, however, the decision has been confirmed, the award takes the shape of law.

The most striking clauses of this Act are the penal ones, which can be applied to any violation of the terms of the award—

> "1. If any person does any act or thing in the nature of a lock-out or strike, or takes part in a lock-out or strike, or suspends or discontinues employment or work in any industry, he shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding one thousand pounds, or in default to imprisonment not exceeding two months.
>
> "2. If any person instigates or aids in any of the above-mentioned acts he shall be liable to imprisonment for a period of twelve months."

It may be noted that the clause against instigation

was strengthened from the Act of 1908 in 1909, when the option of a fine was abolished. Meetings for the purpose of defying the law of awards also make the participators liable to punishment. There follows a clause which will be of the greatest interest to those in England who take an interest in industrial questions, and particularly to those who opposed the Trades Disputes Act—

> "Where any person convicted of an offence against the provisions of Section 42 (Combination in restraint of Trade) was, at the time of his committing such offence, a member of a Trade or Industrial Union, the Industrial Court may order the Trustees of the Trade Union, or of a branch thereof, or may order the Industrial Union to pay out of the funds of the Union or branch any amount not exceeding £20 of the penalty imposed."

Finally, Section 59 contained a provision which is worth noting in view of the recent offer of the Dockers during the strike to give pecuniary guarantees that they would abide by their agreements—

> "The Board or the Industrial Court may at any time after the conclusion of the evidence, and before or after the making of an award, require from any person or Union making application to the Board or the Court in respect of any dispute security to its satisfaction for the performance of the award. . . ."

These clauses taken together provide for Compulsory Arbitration and a stationary rate of wages enforceable by law, either by fine or imprisonment. They make

the Trade Union or Employers' Federation liable up to a certain point for the acts of its members. They enable the court to exact a financial guarantee for the carrying out of the award or agreement.

Before discussing how far it is possible to apply all or any of these provisions to industrial conditions and combinations in this country, one must inquire how the Act has worked in New South Wales. It must be admitted at once that it has not proved extremely successful in operation. No official records are kept of strikes, but the following particulars can be relied upon. Strikes on the whole have increased rather than diminished since 1901, though few of them have been of any great importance.

Out of 186 strikes from 1901 to 1908 the law was defied by the strikers in thirteen cases. "In two cases only," to quote Mr Ernest Aves' well-known and impartial report, "although leave to prosecute has been much more often granted by the court, have prosecutions been instituted. There has been one conviction followed by the imposition of a fine." The Act, in a word, has not been found to be really effective in stopping strikes where the men were determined to go out. On the other hand, the great number of decisions and awards which have been accepted by both sides would appear to prove that in a large proportion of cases the pressure of public opinion and the influence of the possible application of penal provisions have acted as a deterrent. Apart from some legal difficulties of interpretation, the real reasons for the comparative failure of the Act are perhaps best stated by Mr Justice Heydon, President of the Arbitration Court—

> "There is a good deal of confusion of thought in the public mind as to the objects to be obtained

by the introduction of compulsory arbitration in industrial matters. . . . Properly speaking, however, the objects aimed at are (1) the prevention of sweating, and (2) the prevention or limitation of strikes and lock-outs. . . .

"The second object of compulsory industrial arbitration is much more difficult of attainment. To forbid strikes, and compel industrial disputants to come to a court, and to clothe that court with power to regulate, by a compulsory decree, the conditions that prevail in every industry in which the parties are unable to agree of themselves, is to intrude into a totally different sphere. If there are weak classes likely to be imposed upon, and, in the ordinary sense of the term, sweated, and to whom it is in the highest degree just that a fair living wage should be awarded, there are also strong unions able, without the assistance of any tribunal, to win for themselves terms which rise as far above a fair living wage as those of the sweated classes fall below it. To take away from those men the weapon of the strike, and to impose upon them the compulsion of a peaceful award is to enter at once upon difficulties of the gravest character."

When one remembers the overpowering influence which highly-skilled labour exercises on Australian politics and Australian public opinion, one can only come to the conclusion that the partial failure of these Acts in New South Wales is due less to their actual provisions than to the lack of any overwhelming support from the public opinion of the country. Where the wage is unduly low to start with, the award is accepted and no further trouble ensues; but where the wage is already high, and the Board will not give in to the

terms of the men, and the men will not accept the decision of the Board, it appears that public opinion will not support the application of the penal provisions.

So far I may appear to have been arguing against my own contentions. That is not, as I shall hope to show, the case. But in any case the decision we have to take is so momentous that it would be folly to embark on a scheme of compulsory arbitration without weighing every fact which appears to tell against that policy.

My own view is that the New South Wales Acts have been a valuable factor in promoting industrial peace in a number of cases where, but for the existence of the Boards, industrial war might have ensued. Their failure, in so far as they have failed, has been due to two causes, neither of which need necessarily be reproduced in any analogous legislation in this country. The penal provisions are too severe, and there is not enough public opinion behind them.

I will take the penal provisions first.

The penalties of fine and imprisonment for defiance of a Conciliation Board are of vital importance, because they raise the issue of the liability of the Trade Union in the case of resistance to an award of the court. Although there is no Trades Disputes Act in New South Wales, the Act of 1908 places the onus for the violation of the award far too much on the individual striker and far too little on the Union, and I would, with the hesitation proper to an outsider, suggest that this is one of the reasons for its failure. You cannot fine twenty thousand people ten pounds each and send them to prison if they will not or cannot pay. Neither public opinion nor the machinery of society will stand such a strain. What you can do is something quite different, but probably far more effective. If a Trade

Union submits its case to an impartial tribunal and refuses to accept the award, you can at least insure that the members of that Trade Union do not draw strike pay while they are acting in defiance of the legal decision of the tribunal to which their case has been submitted. An employer who takes a similar course can, of course, always be fined or sent to prison in default, because he is an individual in a prominent and responsible position, and cannot escape by the mere confusion and pressure of numbers. It is, of course, obvious that to carry out these suggestions in the necessary services involves amendment of the Trades Disputes Act. Recent events have, however, made it less difficult to make Trade Union funds liable for a breach of agreement. One of the great difficulties in recent labour troubles has been the continual accusation from one side or another that the other party has failed to keep an agreement, and that there was no method of compelling them to do so. So evident did this difficulty become in the last dock strike that the men—apparently with the approval and consent of the Government—made a voluntary offer of a financial deposit on the part of their Union as a guarantee that terms once accepted would not be broken as long as the term of agreement lasted. This proposal is, of course, inconsistent with the principle of the Trades Disputes Act, and some amendment of that Act must inevitably follow if such a deposit is to be sequestrated or touched in any way.

There remains the second objection to the New South Wales Act—the objection of public opinion to putting it into force. Here, again, the position of affairs in England is not the same as in New South Wales. The objection comes, as my quotations have indicated, from that class of highly skilled labour which believes it can get more out of a strike than it could get out of

any award. This particular class may be dominant in New South Wales—it is certainly not so dominant in the United Kingdom. Here it does not comprise the sweated industries, unskilled labour, the agricultural labourer, the employer of labour, the middle classes and the great commercial interests. If in the necessary services the unskilled or partially skilled labourer obtained a proper remuneration for his services, and if in return society obtained security from these continuous, devastating, and as a rule ineffective strikes, surely the vast mass of public opinion would support any Government in enforcing, under financial penalties, the award of a Conciliation Court. Nor, I think, would society hesitate in taking the necessary drastic measures against the professional disturbers of the public peace who continued to disregard a fair decision of an impartial tribunal. I do not for a moment regard a national movement in favour of compulsory arbitration as a final panacea of all our industrial difficulties. But such a movement would at least do one thing: it would give the nation a breathing space. It would give that vast mass of public opinion, which is earnestly desirous of doing the right thing by the industrial masses, an opportunity of considering all the various plans of Social Reform which are before it, and of taking its choice. If it delivered us from the blackmail strike, while insuring reasonable conditions of life for the workers in the essential services, a great advance would be involved. Order would be maintained and unfair conditions abolished, and the nation might go on to prosper in its business under a reign of peace and quietness and to lay the foundations of the State of the future upon secure industrial and social conditions. If the scheme proved practicable, we should secure both justice and peace.

XIII

THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION IN EDUCATION

A POLITICAL view of the education controversy implies a certain spirit of detachment towards purely educational problems. A politician as such cannot be expected to formulate a theory of the merits of classical education as compared with those of modern education; or to judge between different and competing theories of physical culture; or to select the books out of which the English language and literature are to be taught. These matters must be left to the teachers, and to the educational experts whose business in life it is to lead educational opinion and practice. The experts must no doubt be exposed at times to the criticism and the cross-examination of the plain man, including the plain politician, whose duty it is to force the specialists to make their work suit the broad purposes of common life. But criticism and cross-examination are not dictation, and to prescribe by general law tutorial methods and educational curricula would be almost as absurd as to prescribe similarly for engineers the measurements and materials of the bridges and public works which they execute for the Government. A like or even greater spirit of detachment should inspire the politician who seeks to form and

expound views on the religious element in public education. The principle of toleration requires that he shall not dictate by political action what other people's religion is to be. The educational problem of the precise method by which religion should be taught in schools he must leave to those whose business it is to teach religion and to their intellectual and religious leaders.

Few, I think, will be found to dispute these obvious principles. It is with their application to the facts that the difficulty begins. One of the commonplaces of political agitation is a complaint against the religious denominations for their "wretched religious squabbles"; if only we had a clean slate, says the politician, and could start afresh, free from the interference of priest or preacher, how easy it would all be. I venture to think that if priest and preacher were to compose their differences and turn upon their critics, they might make a not ineffective answer to these charges. After all, the difficulty has been created as much by the politicians as the sects. The politicians decreed that all children should be compelled to attend school; they decreed the public bodies which were to provide the schools and to enforce the attendance; they decreed the statutory obligations by which taxpayers and ratepayers are compelled to find the funds for this education. The greater part of the religious difficulty as we see it to-day arises inevitably from these facts. The sects and their differences were in existence, staring Parliament in the face, before the education statutes were passed, and complaints against the sects, because the statutes have increased the differences, come ill from the politicians who passed the statutes. As for the complaint against vested interests, Parliament itself did most to establish those interests.

A short account of some facts very familiar to the educational expert, but often forgotten by politicians, will show the basis of these conclusions. At the beginning of the last century the lack of educational opportunities for the poor began to attract the attention of social reformers. The increase in the urban population and the growth of the factory system made the matter urgent. Millowners in Lancashire began to build schools for the children of their mill-hands. Voluntary societies were founded to establish schools for the poor throughout the land. The State for many years did nothing to help, and school-building was carried on entirely by voluntary effort. In 1833 a small Exchequer grant was made to aid this volunteer enterprise. A few years later a special public department, the Committee of Council on Education, was set up to create and control an extended system of Parliamentary grants. Admirable work was done under this system, but it was due in the main to the zeal of religious bodies. A very large number of schools was founded, and these schools are the origin of the so-called non-provided schools of the existing Education Acts. In view of the complaints now made against the vested interests which this process produced, it is needful to reconstruct it with precision. The State in effect went about entreating people to build and manage schools, and offered subsidies to anyone who consented; it badly wanted schools to be founded, and being incapable of founding them itself, besought private citizens to come to its help. Our splendid modern system of local authorities and their lavish expenditure on local objects must not blind us to the conditions under which statesmen worked in the first three-quarters of the last century. In practically all the country districts and in most of the smaller

towns there was no public body capable of exercising educational functions, and no source of public revenue from which a contribution to the building of schools was thinkable. The management question was as difficult as any, and the published records of the Committee of Council show how anxious a matter was the discovery of persons of culture and responsibility in each village and township who, without payment, would take upon themselves the permanent burden of establishing and controlling a village school for the poor. The training of teachers was in its infancy, and general educational experience hardly existed. The Education Department, therefore, found it hard to secure a sufficiency of unpaid and competent local officials. Whitehall naturally first looked in its difficulties to the man who was charged with the cure of souls in the parish, who was always on the spot, and who represented a high average of culture and responsibility. If the clergy took up the work of national education out of zeal for denominational interests, they did so at the urgent request of the State itself. If the system which the State then helped to create is now obstructive to educational reform (I do not for a moment say that it is), the State, as much as anyone, is responsible for the obstruction. That politicians should abuse the religious sects for vested interests which they themselves called into being is indeed a deplorable instance of one of the greatest evils of democracy, namely, the evasion by the people of responsibility for their own acts.

The Elementary Education Act, 1870, was a great educational reform, but for my present purposes its importance arises from its bearing on the religious difficulty which confronts us to-day. It did not affect the principle of the creation of vested interests; both

under the Act of 1870 and under the Act of 1902 the State continued to invite the help of voluntary effort in the provision of schools. But the religious difficulty in its present form was very largely caused by the Act of 1870. Its growth, though slow and gradual, is the logical and historical result of the principles of the Act. The difficulty may have existed before under other phases and in a different degree, but its aspect and extent to-day are the direct outcome of the Act of 1870. Before the Act anyone of any denomination could found a school and receive a State grant on complying with the conditions imposed by the Education Department, but no ratepayer had to pay for any school, and no parent had to send his child to one. Under the Act of 1870 the principles were recognised that there must be schools everywhere, that everyone must send his child to one, and every ratepayer must if necessary be prepared to pay for them. It became obvious that these principles brought the State much closer to the question of the character of the teaching given in the schools, now called for the first time by the statutory title of "public elementary schools," and that, if ever the public took a controversial interest in the subject, Parliament would have to give a definite decision on educational principles in response to public requirements.

The decision given by Parliament in the Act of 1870 upon the character of religious teaching—the one point which has excited public controversy — was not definite, and certainly does not respond to the public requirements of to-day. The teaching in voluntary schools was to be anything the founders chose to dictate; the teaching in the new "Board" Schools was to be anything the school-boards chose to dictate, subject to the Cowper-Temple clause, which

prevented the school-boards (or was construed in practice so as to prevent them) from giving religious teaching satisfactory to the denominational views of Churchmen, Roman Catholics, and Jews. It is often said that the resulting grievances are theoretical only, and have no real existence inside the schools themselves. I am afraid that this answer will never satisfy the politicians. Theoretical and sentimental the grievances may be, but they confront the politician with a grim reality in the shape of local deputations, questions at public meetings, votes at elections, debates, and divisions in Parliament. Moreover, though the local grievances are no doubt much exaggerated, their complete non-existence cannot truthfully be asserted.

The Education Act, 1902, was the next great step in educational history. Its full educational importance cannot be dealt with here, but, in order to appreciate the results of the Act, both political and legal, a word is necessary as to the purely educational grounds upon which the Act was justified, and the nature of the general objections to the Act. The previous Education Acts dealt only with elementary education, and the authorities they set up had, with minor exceptions, no powers to deal with secondary education, which was the sphere of another set of public bodies. This fact, coupled with the dual system of voluntary and "Board" schools in the elementary sphere, made the cry of the educational and administrative experts urgent for the co-ordination under one public authority of all public education. The financial difficulties of voluntary schools constituted another element injurious to education which reformers became anxious to remove. The benefits of the Act in its effect upon these admitted evils have been complete. Yet the hostile agitation which the Act had to face rested originally quite as

much upon these educational provisions as upon the specific religious grievances which it caused. The framers of the Act have indeed reason to be satisfied with the failure of the campaign against the Act upon its secular side; the cry against the destruction of school-boards is no longer heard[1]; the charge that education controlled by committees appointed and controlled by local authorities is an anti-popular system has been shown to be baseless; indeed, the whole trend of legislation and public opinion since the Unionist Party left office in 1905 has been in the direction of the policy of the Act of 1902—the abolition of a multiplicity of so-called *ad hoc* authorities and the enlargement of the functions of the main local authority of each area, so as to give it the general local government functions of its area. The loud complaints against the local expenditure which the Act caused have likewise been dissipated on their political side by the course of events; the principle of an educational rate in every area has been fully accepted by public opinion, and every Education Bill introduced in succeeding Parliaments has aimed at increasing the local burdens beyond the limits of the Act of 1902.

At the present moment, therefore, the politician finds the ground clearer before him than in the agitated period of the years immediately following the Act. The religious objections to the Act are now seen to be the only ones which have endured the test of experience. I have alluded to the other objections because the political agitation in its immediate practical operation cannot be resolved into its elements, and must be

[1] I ought to except from this statement the small body of old-fashioned Radical educationists, led by Lord Sheffield, who has never forgiven the merging of the London School Board, so long his own special province, in the London County Council.

treated as a whole. As a whole, its effect upon the Government of the day was disastrous; the opponents of the religious conditions of the Act were quick to see their tactical advantage, and united all the discontented factions in a furious onslaught on the Act in its entirety; the grossest possible misrepresentations of the Act on both its secular and religious sides became current, a natural consequence of the issues being merged in ordinary partisan warfare. The philosophic spectator of the struggle can indeed hardly fail to derive innocent enjoyment from the righteous operations of the whirligig of time. Mr Lloyd George, the chief artist of the educational calumny of those days, now bewails the misrepresentation to which (as he asserts) a Budget or an Insurance Act is subjected; then he invited the Welsh local authorities to defeat an Act of Parliament, now he tells Treasury deputations that it is the duty of all law-abiding citizens to carry out Acts of Parliament, however much politically they may be opposed to them; then he denounced the civil servants of the Board of Education by name, now he denounces the unfairness and constitutional impropriety of attacks on civil servants.[1] With the accession of Mr Lloyd George and his friends to power and responsibility the Educa-

[1] An amusing fact is the recent appointment by Mr Lloyd George of Sir Robert Morant as chairman of the Insurance Commissioners; the former, in the greatest political scrape of his life, goes to the civil servant whom he attacked more fiercely than anyone during the Education controversy to get his distinguished assistance in carrying through the administration of the most complicated and unpractical measure of modern times. If anyone can succeed in making the Act work, Sir Robert Morant will. It is to be hoped that Mr Lloyd George will perceive that his former attacks were a menace to that Civil Service tradition of independence which enables him to-day to rely upon the loyal help of the new chairman of the Insurance Commissioners.

tion Act of 1902 gets a fairer hearing, and the original unpopularity of the Act in many of its aspects has disappeared.

Even on its religious side, some misconceptions have been partially cleared away by experience. The Protestant ardour which saw in every body of voluntary school managers a ritualistic conspiracy has ceased to be suspicious of the Act. The gross legal fallacies by which the popular mind was persuaded that the Act gave to privately appointed managers the control of public money provided for voluntary schools, if they have not disappeared, have at any rate receded before the contrary knowledge and contrary experience of countless members and officials of the local authorities.

My object in the rest of this article is to examine the true bulk of grievances in our educational system left apparent after the clouds of misrepresentation, both secular and religious, have been dispersed, and to discuss the tendency shown by political opinion towards their removal during the time since the original outburst against the Act of 1902 spent its force.

These grievances, be it first noted, were not the creation of the Act, which left the religious arrangements of the previous system as it found them. But collateral changes made in 1902 focussed and intensified the theoretical objections which Nonconformists had entertained to the system of 1870. They felt it to be a perpetuation of a state of things which they had hoped would ultimately disappear in the course of time, and, in particular, before economic pressure. Above all, the ratepayer at large was first brought into direct contact with voluntary schools. Mr Balfour, when introducing the Bill, showed that he was alive to the possibility of sectarian agitation, but it is to be doubted whether his acutely logical mind sufficiently appreciated the ease

with which people who had for years paid taxes to support religious teaching which was not of their own faith could find it a point of conscience not to pay rates for the same purpose. The truth was that grievances which were remote and thought to be disappearing were suddenly brought near, and endowed with a chance of permanence. The favouring breeze of political agitation, based on the other elements of unpopularity latent in the Bill, fanned the flame into a blaze. The fact that the Act actually cured various other Nonconformist grievances did not avail to save it from the odium of those which it left more prominent if not more real than it found them.[1] The Nonconformist objections to the Act of 1902 may be conveniently summarised as follows :—

1. In a very large number of districts there is no choice of religious instruction, and, owing to the preponderance of schools founded by Churchmen, Nonconformist parents must either accept Church teaching for their children or withdraw them altogether from all religious teaching ; this is the famous "single-school area" grievance, and it is essentially a parental grievance.

2. A large number of teacherships, especially head-teacherships, are by the operation of the trust deeds of voluntary schools closed to Nonconformist teachers, and confined to members of the Church.

3. Ratepayers who are not interested in or are

[1] The trust deed "test" for assistant teacherships and pupil teacherships in Church schools was relaxed in favour of Nonconformists ; power was given to local authorities to set up undenominational training colleges ; in the provision of new schools, parental choice was for the first time given play. All these matters had been grounds of Nonconformist complaint, and justice has never been done to the Act of 1902 for their removal.

opposed to Church teaching may be required nevertheless to pay rates to support that teaching.

4. The purely religious objections of such ratepayers are aggravated by the element of denominational control over schools largely supported by public funds and the exclusion of the public authorities from the complete control of the public patronage of the education service; these latter points are political rather than religious, but the merging of politics and religion which has characterised the opposition to the Act of 1902 is closest at such points of contact.

A full answer to these objections, themselves stated in the baldest manner, would be foreign to my purpose. As regards the first, Churchmen admit the anomaly, but insist that the only cure thus far proposed by official Nonconformity is one which shifts the grievance from Nonconformity to the Church, and that if the barrier of the trust deed is to be broken down in the villages, that of the Cowper-Temple clause must go in the towns. The reply as to the teacherships is equally effective; the Church pays through the value and upkeep of school buildings for the right to dictate the denominational qualifications of the teachers, subject to the local authority's judgment as to their secular efficiency; if the privilege be abolished, the payment must go too. Further, the qualification of teachers to give religious teaching must be determined somehow, and up to the present the legislative plans of official Nonconformity have failed to provide any means for its determination. As to the ratepayers, if a fair educational system is set up by Parliament, it is not for the ratepayers to decide that it shall not be carried into effect, and the settlement of the ratepayers'

grievances really depends on the settlement of the other grievances. In the meantime, for the reasons already stated, the Church ratepayer has at least as much grievance as the Nonconformist ratepayer. The demand for further public control over voluntary schools can likewise only be justified by the acceptance by the public of the whole burden of the expenditure. Moreover, at present the local authority has all the control required to insure the secular efficiency of the schools, and the managers only so much as is needed for maintaining their religious character. Assuming a resettlement of religious conditions on fair lines, the control can be arranged so as to suit the resettlement.

As I shall show, the controversy, so long as it proceeds on these lines, runs on its course to a natural settlement upon the principle of the substitution of parental choice for the artificial restrictions of trust deeds and statutory prohibitions. The early history of the post-1902 *régime* showed clear tendencies in this direction. The Liberal Party, as a whole, for the most part kept itself aloof from extreme courses, and maintained a detached attitude towards certain abstract claims put forward by a militant section of Radical Nonconformity. The most significant instance of this detachment is to be found in the declaration which Mr Augustine Birrell published in a well-known Liberal magazine at a time when he was already Minister-designate of Education in an approaching Liberal Government. The passage has often been quoted; and it is a landmark in the progress of the educational ideas of the Liberal Party:—

> "Here the parents really must, whether they like it or not, conquer their shyness, and, making their first appearance in this ancient and horrid

controversy, tell us, when they send Tom and Jane to school, whether they wish them to receive any, and, if any, what religious instruction. There is no chance of the multiplication of strange parental religions. We are not an imaginative people. Jews, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Dissenters (in a lump) will usually exhaust the list. The great body of Dissenters will be found ready to accept the same broad simple Bible-teaching which, for the most part, characterised Board School Christianity." — *Independent Review*, October 1903.

Declarations of a similar character came from other prominent Liberal politicians. Thus Mr Herbert Samuel, fresh from a triumphant by-election in Yorkshire, and claiming a special mandate on the education question, declared in an emphatic way in favour of the principle of free parental choice during the third reading of the Bill :—

"Would it have been impossible after all to have arrived at some new and larger compromise on this question which would have ended once and for all this long wrangle, this lamentable quarrel, which for sixty years has kept the Churches apart and has so often prevented this House from doing its full duty to the children. What is it that honourable members opposite specially desire? Is it that the children should have the right to be instructed in the religious doctrines of their parents? Would it have been impossible for us to have conceded that claim? . . . My right hon. friend the Member for South Aberdeen urges that, after all, this dogmatic teaching was unnecessary, and

> that the virtues could be inculcated without specific denominational instructions. That is also my own view, but I do not think the State is entitled to say that. The State has no right to declare how much or how little dogmatic teaching is necessary for the formation of character. This House is not a synod, and those who hold Disestablishment views should be the first to proclaim that Parliament is incompetent to say exactly what particular religious principles persons should hold and be taught. *As a Liberal I wish to see the greatest possible liberty given for all sorts of religious beliefs to be taught even in the schools paid for by the State.*"—*Hansard*, 1902, vol. 115, p. 975.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman committed himself a year or two later to a similar principle:—

> "We want the child to be brought up in the faith of his father, at least until he comes to such an age as to be able to judge of a faith for himself."
> —*The Times*, 27th October 1904.

A glance at the speeches of Liberal politicians on the third reading of the Education Bill of 1902 makes it clear that in those days they concentrated their attention upon the specific defects of the Bill, and the specific grievances of Nonconformists, and refrained from committing themselves to principles directly adverse to the Church of England or to denominational teaching. But in the meantime different influences had been at work. Mr Lloyd George had raised himself to power as head of a group by means of the special agitation he had conducted in Wales against the administration of the Education Act; Dr Clifford and

other leaders of political Nonconformity had launched out upon an aggressive campaign against the influence of the Church; vague language about a national system of education, accompanied by denunciations of denominationalism and priestcraft, foreboded an adroit sectarian attack upon the Church going far beyond the original demand for the redress of specific grievances.

The effect of this movement was seen when Mr Birrell's Education Bill of 1906 was introduced. It contained but the faintest vestige of Mr Birrell's above-quoted principles, and showed clearly that his original draft had been torn in shreds by successive assaults from the section of the Cabinet representing the forward movement. The concessions to the denominational principle were limited to a half-hearted attempt by means of the notorious Clause 4 to conciliate the Irish vote, in anticipation of the Irish Council Bill promised for the next session, and to an equally half-hearted attempt to provide compensation for the vested interests in school buildings by certain facilities for denominational teaching in voluntary schools acquired by local authorities. The doctrine of parental rights was decisively repudiated in response to the strong insistence by the forward group that its enforcement would split the party on the morrow of its great electoral triumph.

The House of Lords by its amendments to the Bill sought to bring the controversy back to its old footing. Had the Bill passed in the form in which it recrossed the Lobby, the specific grievances of Nonconformists would have been met, while the rights of other denominations would to a large extent have been secured. But the wave of extremism in the House of Commons was too strong, and it found a ready ear in the purely political hostility of Liberalism to any interference by the House of Lords with a first-class Liberal Bill.

Resentment against the Lords rather than a desire for an education settlement became (not unnaturally, as political human nature goes) the mainspring of Liberal education policy for the next eighteen months. A new Bill was promised by a new Education Minister which, in Mr McKenna's own words, was to be a "sword," and, in the Prime Minister's words, "a short, simple, and drastic Bill." These expressions and the Bill which Mr McKenna introduced early in the session of 1908 mark the turning point of Liberal sentiment, and from that time there has been a rapid return to the original and more moderate standpoint. For public opinion began to change, or rather to make itself articulate on the dispute. Churchmen who had voted Free Trade in 1906 found occasion to emphasise their educational views; Roman Catholics rallied in defence of their schools; the municipal elections of 1907 in many important areas swept local authorities almost bare of the opponents of Church teaching; Parliamentary by-elections showed a similar tendency. The result was the withdrawal of Mr McKenna's Bill, and the substitution of Mr Runciman's attempt at compromise at the end of the same year. Nothing could be more significant than the introduction of Mr Runciman's Bill and the explanations given by Ministers of the change in their tactics. The Bill itself conceded the whole or the greater part of the three main principles upon which the controversy between the two Houses of Parliament had turned in 1906, including the right of entry for denominational teaching in Council schools. Ministers insisted that the feelings of 1906 had subsided and that national opinion required a more moderate policy. Thus Mr Runciman, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said:—

> "My predecessors who have had charge of previous Bills lived in much stormier times than these; and I am glad to think that the difficulties which faced my right honourable friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr Birrell) and my right honourable friend the First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr McKenna) have not surrounded me. When I came into office, I already found that the atmosphere was considerably altered. Not that both sides did not cling just as tenaciously as before to their principles, but there appeared to me to be a greater readiness on the part of both sides to understand, or to attempt to understand, the principles of their opponents, and greater eagerness to find methods upon which to base compromise without sacrifice of principle. It was only possible by the exercise of mutual forbearance and respect to reach the present stage in this controversy."—*Hansard*, 1908, vol. 197, p. 417.

Anything less like the "short, simple, and drastic" or "sword" policy of the preceding two years cannot well be imagined, and I do not complain that Mr Runciman's language aimed at concealing the facts that the change was entirely on the Liberal side, and that it involved an almost complete surrender of the policy forced in 1906 upon Mr Birrell by his advanced supporters, and taken up in 1907 by Mr McKenna with ill-concealed enthusiasm.

Many utterances showing the change of Liberal view might be quoted from the debates; that of Mr Llewelyn Williams, M.P., a typical Welsh Radical educationist, will be sufficient; he was himself in favour of a secular solution, but he supported denominational rights as a compromise and a matter of fairness:—

"In this Bill Cowper-Temple teaching was treated as denominational instruction; it received preferential treatment and that was unfair. . . . That was why they were compelled to say that the right of entry to all the schools should be granted to all the denominations. . . . The right of entry was a thing which he did not care for himself. . . . He frankly confessed it was a thing he denounced at the last election. To-day he and his friends were compelled in fairness and equity to support the Government in this matter. The first reason was that, as they were told, it was a compromise. It was a compromise which entailed sacrifices on the Church of England; they had to give up every school they possessed in the single-school areas. Some compensation should be given in justice and fairness for that. In the second place, Cowper-Temple teaching, which was not only believed in by a majority of Nonconformists, but which was endowed out of public funds, was continued by the Bill. In the face of these two things it was only just and equitable that real compensation should be given to the Church of England for the sacrifices they made. If the right of entry was to be granted to them, they must see that the facilities were real and not sham."—*Hansard*, 1908, vol. 197, p. 1312.

The next General Election amply confirmed these views as to the tendency of events. The anti-denominational majority of the 1906 Parliament disappeared, and the two parties, Unionist and Irish, who voted against both Mr Birrell's Bill and Mr McKenna's Bill in that Parliament, found themselves in a majority in the new House of Commons. The

General Election which took place ten months later did not alter the situation, and it is now the duty of politicians to face the facts. A recent speech delivered by Mr Runciman in the course of his transit from the Board of Education to the Board of Agriculture suggests that some Liberal Ministers are under no delusions. According to the report in *The Times*:—

> "He counselled impatient Nonconformist friends not to think of the education question as one easy of settlement. True, some of the obstacles of the past had gone, the foremost being the veto of the House of Lords. But having regard to the present composition of the House of Commons no extreme view on the education question could be rammed down its throat. Any such attempt would necessarily be followed by reaction. The dominant factor in any settlement must be, religious equality."—*The Times*, 19th January 1912.

It remains to consider the practical outcome of these hopeful tendencies. The main result is that the principle of giving to the parents of the children who are forced to attend public elementary schools the widest possible freedom to determine the religious teaching which the children are to have is in a fair way to become the basis of future settlement. The adoption of this principle cures at once the main and most justifiable of Nonconformist grievances—the single-school area grievance. At the same time it is the one principle to which Churchmen are willing to subordinate the vested interests of trust deeds and school buildings. To it, also, the sacrifice by Nonconformists of the Cowper-Temple clause is most

easily made. Moreover, the operation of the principle automatically gets rid of a large part of the Nonconformist grievance which is represented by the political cry of "No tests for teachers"; if any question were to arise as to the religious qualifications of a Churchman or a Nonconformist for a teachership, it would cease to be decided by reference to a trust deed or a vested interest, and would depend only on the nature of the duties the teacher was required to perform—namely, the instruction of Church or Nonconformist children.

Here I would offer a word of advice to Churchmen bred in the old school of public education. They have, I believe, two steps to take in order to provide a clear ground for the settlement of this long-standing quarrel. First, they must not stand too stiffly on the rights of their vested interests. The State is bound in honour to safeguard those interests which, as I have shown above, the State itself created; and proposals to confiscate or jettison Church schools will continue to be fiercely resisted. But to insist upon the rigid maintenance of a particular educational mechanism, and to refuse reasonable readjustment of the educational system as a whole, would be to treat vested interests as indefeasible rights incapable of alteration even with proper compensation. Such a course would make too high a demand on the gratitude of the State, and would interpose a solid obstacle to the settlement with Nonconformity, which all must desire. In the second place, the old-fashioned Church educationist has to reckon with Radicalism pure and simple, and on one point at least he would be wise to make an effort to conciliate it. Strange as it may seem, there is a sincere belief in the minds of a certain class of politicians, whose political alliance with Nonconformity is an accident of party warfare, that the village church

school is a mere instrument of feudal oppression; the squire and the parson have combined to stifle the nascent mind of an otherwise free (and Radical) peasantry; the Church catechism is all mere make-believe, except the statement that a child is to order himself lowly and reverently to all his betters; in fact, political influence and not religious education is the object of Church schools and their supporters. Let these suspicions be met by Churchmen with a frank offer to concede the fullest possible public control over all the village schools in England. Let Churchmen demand of Parliament fair regulation for the conduct of religious teaching, and then let them surrender to the public authority the conduct of the schools so regulated. I entirely decline to bow down to the fetish of public control, but, as a politician, I would urge Church people, for the sake of peace, to sacrifice in the country districts the small degree of control still reserved to them by the management clauses of the Act of 1902, and to trust entirely to the operation of a carefully drawn statute imposing upon local education authorities the terms and conditions of parental choice and denominational equality in the conduct of public elementary schools.[1]

To the Radical I would appeal not to lose faith in democracy just at the crucial point. Is our modern system of local government to be treated as capable of bearing almost any administrative weight except

[1] A reasonable elasticity of arrangement by which homogeneous schools, such as Roman Catholics and Lancashire Churchmen require for their children, could continue in areas where there is a choice of schools, would, I assume, form an integral part of an Education Act based on parents' rights. An interesting scheme of this kind, drawn up by Sir Theodore Hope, K.C.S.I., and Mr Arthur Eden, has recently been published.

that of a free system of religious education? I would ask him also to shake off once for all the strange link which binds him to such an arch-sectarian as Dr Clifford, and to the dogmatic abstractions with which that eminent controversialist rivals the jurists of the mediæval Papacy. A sectarian policy does not acquire virtue by being called civic; a plot of political Nonconformity to oust Church influence from public education may be popularised as an attack on priestcraft, but it does not thereby cease to be sectarian aggression. Radical democracy should have no truck with the Jesuits of Protestantism.

The individual Nonconformist I would invite to fix his mind on his specific legislative grievances, and take their redress from any political party that will give it to him. It is redress he should ask for, and he should be careful that what is meat to him is not made another man's poison. If he desires to follow Dr Clifford away from the redress of grievances to the pursuit of suppressing denominationalism, as a politician I can only advise him to consider whether the history of the last six years encourages him to hope that the pursuit will be fruitful. Mr McKenna's policy of "thorough" failed of its own inherent vice, and without the excuse of the House of Lords. A denominational majority is now installed in both Houses of Parliament. A Bill amending the Education Act of 1902 and based on the principles of parents' rights could pass both these Houses, and no other Education Bill could. If Nonconformists want the redress of their educational grievances, they can get it. If, on the other hand, they prefer to repeat the experiences of 1906–1910, that alternative too is open to them.

XIV

THE PARLIAMENT ACT IN RELATION TO DEMOCRACY

At the time of the General Election the Parliament Act was everywhere recommended as the restoration to the constituencies of the right to govern England. The House of Lords, such was the suggestion, had usurped powers which they had never legally possessed, and the time had come, once for all, to render them helpless. This point of view was rhetorically expressed in the familiar question, illustrated by a disgusting cartoon, "Shall six hundred peers rule six million Englishmen?" The measure has now been in operation for a period sufficiently long to make it possible to examine, in an atmosphere somewhat calmer than that of a General Election, the justice of the claim underlying these representations.

We are, all of us, agreed that for good or for evil we are governed by democracy. The apparent tendency is to extend rather than to restrict the popular character of our Government. It is, indeed, perhaps a safe prediction that the government of this country will remain democratic unless the tendency above adverted to should be arrested by civil convulsions. This speculation, though full of interest, would carry us too far from the immediate subject of inquiry. Democratic government has

many merits, and it suffers from some not inconsiderable defects. Some critics will lay stress on the merits, others will be more impressed by the defects, but all alike will agree that it is supremely important, as long as we purport to be governed by democracy, that the reality of our constitution should correspond with its labels.

There is much to be said for a democratic system of government, as there is much to be urged on behalf of an autocratic system. There is nothing whatever that can be urged in favour of a constitution which, under the name of democracy, has in effect concentrated every faculty of government in the hands of a small clique which has cheated the people of every vestige of effective control over the national policy. It is the object of this article to show that the present Cabinet is such a clique; that the Parliament Act is the instrument by which they have speciously effected their purpose; and that, so far from having restored power to the electorate, they have by a fraud persuaded democracy to sanction a more supreme abdication of power than any democracy has ever voluntarily made in the history of the world.

Many illustrations might be given to support this view. The Insurance Bill is as instructive as any. The Prime Minister assured the country that adequate powers to delay unconsidered, or imperfectly understood, legislation would still remain to the House of Lords. The Insurance Act was sent to the Second Chamber for consideration at the very end of a Session already protracted beyond precedent, and under circumstances making it evidently impossible for that House to give the time necessary for its consideration. The House of Commons had bestowed many months upon the measure without a single obstructive discussion; and yet many of its most vital provisions were hardly discussed at all.

Three or four months would have been required for the purposes of a serious or useful consideration in the Second Chamber. Moreover, the Parliament Act expressly gave the countenance of a statute to the most extreme claims ever made by the House of Commons in respect of financial privilege; any amendments of importance made by the House of Lords to the National Insurance Bill must have had a financial aspect, and would have been denounced as a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons. The Government, under the stress of their Irish obligations, sent the Bill to the Lords at a date and under circumstances which insured that the Bill should become law with as little reference to the Second Chamber as if the forms of that assembly had been destroyed as completely as its substance. The Act, in fact, was passed under a unicameral system of government, and it is very material to notice that not even Mr Lloyd George has claimed that his proposals were ever submitted to or sanctioned by the constituencies.

It is, under these circumstances, illuminating to analyse some of the Prime Minister's recent references to the supposed electioneering consequences of the Act. He has told us that the Government never expected it would be an asset, and that they introduced it, not because they thought it would be popular, but because they were satisfied that it would at least be beneficial. Similarly, Mr Lloyd George has informed an admiring interviewer that every statesman worthy the name must be prepared to carry measures which are unpopular. These expressions of opinion suggest much material for thought.

If a grateful country had unanimously requested the Prime Minister to be good enough for the next few years to discharge in his own person the functions heretofore

vaguely distributed between the Lords, the Commons, and the Constituencies, his position would be perfectly intelligible. He would, under those circumstances, be entitled to pass this Act or any other Act which he himself thought, or Mr Lloyd George persuaded him, was likely to benefit the community. Nor would it be necessary in such a case to consult the people. But in the actual circumstances the claim put forward is astounding in its naïve assurance. Mr Asquith says in effect, "I have restored to the people by the Parliament Act the right to govern themselves; I have given a new charter to democracy, and, having enfranchised them, I pass a complex measure, affecting every household in the country, which is not 'an electioneering asset'"; or, in other words, which the people do not want and against which they would vote if they were afforded an opportunity.

Nor can the answer be made that the Insurance Act is likely to prove an exceptional case. There is no reason whatever for supposing that it will be so, and there is every reason for supposing that it will not. The Parliament Act depended upon one principle only, that there is an irresistible presumption that every new House of Commons so completely represents the constituencies on every conceivable subject which may assume legislative form that it is unnecessary under any circumstances to consult the people upon any proposals which any House of Commons may sanction during the first two years of its existence. The strength of this chain is the strength, neither more nor less, of its weakest link. If it can be shown that a House of Commons in the first two years of its existence has passed or will pass a Bill which the constituencies, if they retain the power, would veto, it is apparent that by whatever other arguments the measure may be

supported it cannot appeal to those which draw their strength from the principles of democracy.

Accident, or the weakness of the Government, or both, have provided us with a method of testing the working of the Parliament Act which is even more striking than that furnished by the Insurance Act. The Franchise Bill is drafted in such a manner as to allow an amendment which will enfranchise a certain number of women. Whether such an amendment will receive the support of a Parliamentary majority no man living can confidently predict. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that it is carried. We shall be face to face then with a measure passed by the House of Commons in that halcyon and sacrosanct period in which every supporter of the Parliament Act is bound to admit that the First Chamber necessarily reflects the real wishes of the electors. If the Parliament Act was well-conceived it is evident that the Government have the same right, neither more nor less, to carry into law Female Suffrage without consulting the constituencies as they have to carry Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment. But recent occurrences have made it abundantly clear that some of the strongest supporters of the Parliament Act are of opinion that the biennial period may be freely used to carry into law every change, however novel and far-reaching, which they desire, but that it cannot without the gravest impropriety be used for the purpose of carrying novel proposals of which they disapprove.

A great demonstration was recently held at the Albert Hall to protest against the concession of votes to women. The meeting was addressed by Lord Loreburn, the late Lord Chancellor, and he was supported upon the platform by, I think, no fewer than fifteen of his colleagues. He stated, and evidently

with their consent and approval, that it would be "a constitutional outrage" to pass Female Suffrage by an amendment of the Franchise Bill and without an appeal to the constituencies. Why? Such an amendment will, on the hypothesis, have received the assent of a House of Commons at the very moment when the Parliament Act teaches that the House of Commons for all purposes represents the people. Why is one subject, and one subject only, to be withdrawn from the legislative field upon which this inspired assembly is otherwise permitted to browse in uncontrolled enjoyment? It is no answer to say, as I have myself said in another connection, that however little Home Rule was before the country, Female Suffrage was never before it at all. An opponent of the Parliament Act may draw these distinctions; they are not open to a supporter. No person can hold the view that this House of Commons is constitutionally incapable, except by outrage, of carrying Female Suffrage unless he shares our view that the commission of supreme powers to a Single Chamber during the period permitted by the Parliament Act is inexpedient and ought to be abolished.

It is, therefore, necessary to admit, firstly, that the short period which has elapsed since the Parliament Act became law has made an irreparable inroad upon the principle upon which it was confusedly based; and, secondly, that it admits the risk that measures may become law under its protection which are, in Lord Loreburn's phrase, outrageous. The events which are taking place before the eyes of the country to-day show in a variety of other ways how deeply injurious the measure in operation is proving to those popular rights which it promised to found upon a permanent and unassailable rock. When a new House of Commons

meets it will henceforth become necessary for Ministers to draw a sharp line distinguishing such of their legislative proposals as they really wish to become law from those towards which they feel a vague benevolence, or in respect of which they are bound by unattractive historical commitment. All those measures which fall in the first class will be, and indeed must be, brought forward and carried through their stages either in the first or second Session of the new House of Commons in order that it may become law without consideration by the constituencies.

The result is that the extent of our Parliamentary labours is, and always will be henceforth, determined, not by reference to the amount of work which the House of Commons can reasonably and usefully perform, but by reference to the number of measures which the Government, either to maintain or to prolong their existence, must introduce. The menace to popular liberty of such a system is profound. Suppose, for the sake of example, that the Cabinet of a newly-elected Government decides that six measures at least shall become law before they go out of office. It may well be that every one of those measures would require, unless the Insurance muddle is to be repeated, a whole Session of Parliamentary consideration. The measure may require it, but it will certainly not receive it. Time-tables will be automatically formulated depending not in the least upon the importance of the measure, but upon the available period, having regard to the claims of other measures, which must also become law in the preferential period.

Such a state of affairs makes it clear that deep and vital as was the injury done by the Government to the House of Lords, they have inflicted on the House of Commons a blow far more serious. The House of

Commons, indeed, under its present masters, has become as weary of itself as the country is weary of it. The people do not read our debates, the popular Press does not report them, and our legislators do not listen to them. Vast, complex, and often unintelligible proposals succeed in alternation to the Parliamentary stage with a rapidity which not only bewilders the intelligent politician in the constituencies, but leaves many quite reasonably intelligent Members of Parliament wholly ignorant of the measures which they daily support by their votes in the Lobby.

The state of affairs, thus produced, would be ludicrous if its consequences were not so tragic. The actual results of the Parliament Act up to date may be exhibited in the following way :—(1) The constituencies have lost all control over the legislation of the House of Commons during the period in question ; by-elections are sneered at as the fruit of misrepresentation. (2) The House of Lords has no control over legislation during this period: it can only postpone measures, sharing the hope of Mr Micawber that something will turn up in the course of the following two years. (3) The House of Commons has no control over legislation during the critical period.

The third of these propositions may, at first sight, appear somewhat paradoxical ; it is, in fact, less obvious than the first two, but I believe that on analysis it will appear equally well-founded. Every supporter of the Government in the House of Commons knows that if the Government is defeated during that period on an occasion of importance it will resign and an election will follow, but every supporter of the Government is determined under no circumstances to bring about a premature election, and he is more particularly determined when the political barometer happens to be low. It is

notorious, and no honest man who knows the House of Commons would deny, that many members habitually vote for measures of which they disapprove, supporting themselves by the reflection that it is better to maintain in office a Liberal Government of whose policy they disapprove in one particular, than to give a vote which would place in office the Conservative Party of whose policy they disapprove in every particular. Not only is this view natural, but it can be defended by very respectable authority. Burke said something very like it in his famous vindication of government by party, but if it be true—and that alone is the relevant inquiry in the context—it is evident that the third proposition is as true as the other two, that the House of Commons exercises little or no control during the period when control is most necessary.

But if the Parliament Act has excluded from a real influence over legislation the Constituencies, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, by what man or body of men are the enormous powers of government in fact exercised? Who is it, in other words, who rules England with unrestricted power, controlled by no checks or balances, and able to write his or their will on all subjects upon the pages of the Statute Book? The legatees of the people, the Lords and the Commons, are the Cabinet of the day. They operate with no restraint except such as may be furnished by remote electioneering apprehensions, and they always have at hand for a rainy day Mr Lloyd George with a new Limehouse speech or new land propaganda. Whether the people like their new Constitution remains to be seen, but if they do, and are prepared to stereotype it, they may have many other merits, but they will have ceased to be democrats.

An answer is frequently attempted to these objections,

as stupid as it is superficial. It is contended that all these mischiefs existed whenever a Conservative Government held office, but that the present critics of the Parliament Act were quite unconscious of their evil consequences to the Commonwealth. The statement is grossly exaggerated. I have before me as I write the volumes of the Statutes which were passed during the ten years before 1906, and side by side with them the volumes containing our legislation from 1906 to 1911. A comparison of the size of the volumes during the respective periods is the most effective distinction between the two cases, but I will not elaborate either this or other obvious grounds of differentiation. Let me, for the sake of argument, accept the contention at its face value, and attempt to appraise its controversial value.

The Liberal Party during the last thirty years has almost invariably, when in office, come into collision with the House of Lords. In the discussions which have followed, Liberals have always contrasted the state of affairs which exists under a Unionist Government with that of which they complained when themselves in power. They have pointed out that Liberal Governments were constantly harassed by a partisan Second Chamber, whereas during every period of Conservative Government the country was altogether deprived of the control of a Second Chamber. I do not make here the obvious point that it is the very boast of the Liberal Party that they stand for progress and change, that they commonly reproach the Unionist Party with stagnation and reaction, and that therefore any Second Chamber, however impartial, will certainly be more active when the party which continually proposes great changes is in power, than when the other party is in power. I do not develop this point because, although the statement which I am examining

is grossly exaggerated, it does none the less contain a certain element of truth. It is, and has been the case for many years that under Conservative Governments there was too close a correspondence between the Government of the day and the House of Lords. No House of Commons, however little disposed to rash and hazardous experiment, can be trusted with both the initial and the final control over legislation.

It is a commonplace that no great country in the world is governed to-day by a Single Chamber. The Conservative Party, of all parties, ought clearly to recognise that of all great issues which concern the party of order and stability, none is more vital than the existence of an effective Second Chamber. If such a Chamber be honest, strong, and independent, it matters little what the party labels of its members may be. Therefore, every period during which the Conservative Party has carried on the Government of the country without any real interference by the House of Lords has supplied our opponents with a most dangerous object-lesson of Single Chamber government in operation. These considerations led me in the crisis a year ago to contemplate with great composure the creation of even a considerable number of Liberal Peers. The persons so promoted, if carefully chosen, would have afforded a useful panel, the existence of which would have made it possible to appoint one hundred and fifty Liberals, and as many Conservatives out of the total number of Peers as Lords of Parliament. This opportunity was lost, and greatly as I myself dislike the idea of an elective Second Chamber, the existence of which will, in my judgment, destroy what remains of the prestige of the House of Commons, I see many signs that one or the other party will be driven to propose the solution of an elective Second Chamber as the most defensible and

logical method of escape from our constitutional difficulties.

And it may be further observed that although the Conservative Party is, on the whole, the cautious party, there have been many occasions, periodically recurrent in its history, in which it has made itself the instrument for effecting the most far-reaching reforms. Peel, Disraeli, Lord Randolph Churchill, and even Lord Salisbury himself, introduced many momentous changes in the consideration of which no one could contend that the help of a Second Chamber would be superfluous. Recent history affords us an illustration both convenient and forcible. Mr Balfour, after the Khaki Election, introduced two measures, the Education Act and the Licensing Act, which had certainly, to put it mildly, not played a particularly prominent part amongst the subjects discussed at the General Election, and each of these Bills introduced very important changes in the subject-matter to which it respectively related. The Liberal Party complained most persistently and bitterly of the conditions under which these Bills became law, without, as they alleged, a mandate from the people, and under the conditions of Single Chamber Government. Many persons who were in entire agreement with the policy of Mr Balfour's great Education Act felt that there was some force in the complaints so loudly put forward. The adoption, however, of the policy which has been incorporated in the Parliament Act has left Mr Balfour's Liberal critics without a rag of consistency. They complained that a Unionist House of Commons passed two great measures without an appeal to the people, and the principle of which had never been sanctioned by the people. When their time comes to formulate a constitutional remedy, instead of strengthening the Second Chamber and rendering the

repetition of an undesirable state of things impossible, they stereotype it in the Constitution, and enable every Parliament, Conservative and Liberal alike, to do exactly the thing which they found so unconstitutional and so dangerous.

It is, I think, clear that they were right in their earlier view, and that they are wrong in their present view. I have stated reasons for the conclusion that even a Conservative Government would be stronger, and its legislation better, if an effective Second Chamber revised their measures; but the arguments become overwhelming in their strength when we consider the position of a Coalition Government. The present Ministry is kept in office by Liberals, Nationalists, and Labour Members. They all want a few of the same things, but each of the sections wants, in addition, a number of things which the other sections do not want at all. The objects which they commonly desire are neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently popular to constitute the whole Parliamentary stock-in-trade of their supporters. Each group, in other words, does not get enough of the things which it most particularly desires, hence the necessity for an elaborate system of bargaining. The Irish Party, for instance, wants Home Rule. The Welsh Party wants Welsh Disestablishment. The Irish Party is notoriously indifferent about Welsh Disestablishment, but very anxious to procure Welsh support for Home Rule. Hence the Union is bargained for the Church in Wales. Instances could be multiplied, but they will occur to everyone, and the statement of phenomena so evident need not be prolonged; but it must most carefully be observed that this state of things makes it absolutely certain that measures will be introduced which are positively disliked by a majority in the constituencies. The Labour Party, for

instance, whose strength in the constituencies is at present negligible, but whose votes in the House are at the moment vital, are able to stipulate for a Bill repealing the Osborne Judgment, to which I am certain that the working classes are resolutely opposed.

These inconveniences and dangers were serious before the Parliament Bill became law: they have become, under its operation, a grave menace to the stability of our whole political system. There is no mode by which the constituencies can make their desires effectively felt at the critical period in which alone an unpopular measure may be defeated. Public meetings are useless for the purpose. Any party can fill the Albert Hall with cheering crowds in support of any cause, from Female Suffrage to Anti-vaccination; and even by-elections are scarcely more helpful. No one knows whether vacancies are likely to occur when they are most required, or in seats where there is ever, under any circumstances, a defection from the party in power. It may, however, be argued that an ultimate check is always present, like Black Care behind the ministerial horseman, namely, the fear of an election Nemesis when the inevitable appeal to the country comes at last.

But to this reassurance there are at least two important qualifications. In the first place, however paradoxical it may appear, Ministers occasionally become exhausted, and consequently willing to see the responsibility of government in other hands; and if their work has been effectively and unalterably done, they may contemplate with indifference the certainty that the result of an election will change the Government of the country. The second qualification is even more important. If Ministers do desire re-election, they will be irresistibly tempted to change the whole character of the issues on which they will be tried by the

constituencies. For instance, suppose, to take an extreme illustration, that the present Government were to carry into law all their programme amid growing signs of popular resentment. Suppose, further, that when their work was done twelve months remained in which to conciliate the constituencies, Ministers are left face to face with an overwhelming temptation to devise a great policy of debauchery or class-hatred, in the hope that the popular attention may be diverted for the moment from the legislation by which they ought to be judged. Does anyone, for instance, suppose that Mr Lloyd George ever intended to allow an appeal to the country in which the principal issues would be Welsh Disestablishment and Home Rule?

These considerations are, I hope, sufficient to show clearly the great danger to the whole cause of democratic government, and to the vital interests of the people, which exist, and will exist, so long as the Parliament Act, in its present shape, is on the Statute Book. Under its provisions the constituencies enjoy neither protection nor security, and it is certain that measures will continually become law which are opposed to the wishes of a majority of the electors. Under these circumstances, it is of vital importance that the Unionist Party should clear its mind and decide how great a price it is worth its while to pay for the abolition of conditions so disastrous. I am persuaded that the only solution will be found in the creation of a Second Chamber commanding the confidence of the country, and therefore reasonably claiming the restoration of the powers of which the Parliament Act robbed the House of Lords; and that it is extremely unlikely that any Chamber will receive so large a measure of public support unless it can be recommended to the constituencies as independent and impartial.

XV

PARLIAMENTARY ORATORY

Many Members of the House of Commons have recently complained of the length of the speeches made by those orators who have been successful in catching the eye of Mr Speaker in important debates. It is demonstrated, not without bitterness, that in recent Second Reading debates the average duration of the speeches has been an hour, and that so great a lack of consideration has greatly curtailed the period available to less fortunate Members. The provocation, indeed, has actually revived the movement associated with the name of the late Major Rasch, who carried on for many years a programme in favour of shorter speeches. An appeal, we are told, has been made to private Members, with the result that a considerable majority of the House is pledged to reform in the direction indicated. The movement has its origin on the back benches, but it would be wrong to assume that the grievance is one of the private Member against the front-bencher. It is a movement of those who are not fortunate enough to catch the eye of Mr Speaker directed against those who have succeeded in catching his eye. The greatest offenders are by no means Ministers, ex-Ministers, or future Ministers. It is, of course, true that Members of the two front benches are

naturally accorded the principal places in debate. They speak when important measures require detailed exposition or detailed criticism; but when, as occasionally happens, the rejection of a measure is left in the hands of a private Member, the substitution has not been found to induce economy of debate. The truth is that under modern conditions less time is afforded to what are known as full-dress debates; while far more Members are competent and, being competent, desire to take part in them. It may be true that the great luminaries of the House of Commons are small in comparison with their predecessors, though even this admission must be qualified by the notorious tendency of mankind to exaggerate the past at the expense of the present: but whether this be true or not, it is undoubtedly true that a constantly growing number of private Members has attained to a degree of debating efficiency which would have astonished, as much as it would have inconvenienced, those who stage-managed Parliamentary Debates in the younger days of Disraeli. Everyone will admit that brevity, "concinnatas" of speech, is one of the great gifts of oratory, more valuable because conceded to so few: but the admission does not exclude the reflection that most of the greatest speeches which have ever been delivered in the history of oratory have not been brief. The occasion often dictates the quality of the oratory which is addressed to that occasion. Great subjects stimulate great speakers, but great subjects are not usually treated with adequacy within a short compass of time. Many of Cicero's greatest speeches are models of compression, but few of his greatest speeches are short. I should myself contemplate with the greatest aversion any proposal to limit the length of speeches in the House of Commons. Some of the best speeches I have ever

heard there have lasted an hour. It is true that some of the worst have lasted the same time; but it is a far smaller misfortune that an empty House should be bored by a long and foolish speech, than that a crowded House should be denied, in the absence of special leave, the opportunity of hearing a long and wise one. And it is clear that a proposal to grant any special privilege to the Members of the front benches would be resisted by private Members of all parties. Mr Labouchere, Mr Parnell, Mr Gibson Bowles, Mr Harold Cox, and many other ornaments of parliamentary debate, never sat on the front bench at all; and there will always be in the House of Commons a limited number of men of distinguished parliamentary capacity who from idiosyncrasy, independence, or accident remain faithful to the back benches. To apply a form of closure to such persons in favour of Under-Secretaries and Junior Lords would be as absurd as it would be intolerable. Any discrimination, therefore, between private Members and those who sit on the front bench may be rejected; and I am aware of no other form of discrimination which can be defended by plausible arguments. It has been proposed that special privileges should be conceded to the Minister introducing a Bill and to the Opposition spokesman against it, but it is evident that the course of debate may easily produce changes which would make it reasonable and proper that later speakers should receive similar indulgence. The House of Commons is a very generous assembly: it listens with pleasure to good speeches however bitter and extreme the standpoint: but to ask for special indulgence in favour of an able partisan making a provocative party speech might easily impose an excessive strain upon this quality. Nor do I place much hope in the most recent suggestion that intending speakers should inform Mr

Speaker of the probable length of their speeches. I assume an honest intention, but even with this assumption the security is miserably poor. No man ever says to himself, and no man ever believes when he rises to make a speech that it will be a very long one; still less does he believe that it will be a very dull one; but the mischief which requires correction is that many esteemed persons do, without anticipating their destiny, make speeches which are both very long and very dull. A record of their falsified intentions would merely supply a few new stanzas to the Vanity of Human Wishes. And, after all, the House of Commons is not defenceless. If an inopportune prolixity annoys it at an intolerable moment it can and it does end the mischief by the time-honoured admonition "'vide, 'vide." If the complaint is not that an unwelcome speech has been interposed after the leaders have spoken, and immediately before a division, but merely that, though delivered at a legitimate moment, the speech is dull and the orator a bore, Members are not compelled to stay and do not stay in the Chamber. Even this Government has not ventured to put so great a strain upon the loyalty of its supporters.

The House of Commons always listens with interest, if not always without interruption, to really able speeches: and interruption in a crowded and otherwise silent House is itself one of the greatest compliments that can be paid to a speaker. Members do not interrupt a dull man who is making no impression: they have other weapons—they either leave the Chamber or they talk.

Those who speak with pessimism of our modern orators seem to me somewhat to ignore the tendency to which I have already referred of mankind to make heroes of their predecessors. I am sure that in the

early days of Gladstone and Disraeli, old men who could still recall the brilliant contemporaries of Canning drew comparisons entirely in favour of the early generation. It is true that the taste of the House of Commons has undergone a complete change, but I am by no means satisfied that there are not a certain number of Members in the present House of Commons who could have conformed with striking and even brilliant success to the parliamentary standards of fifty years ago. It is probably safe to predict that no great House of Commons triumph will be attained hereafter, as in the days of Robert Lowe, by Virgilian quotations thrice retorted: still less will a Parliamentary contention be effectively crystallised in a line of Euripides. Had such methods survived, perhaps the late Sir Richard Jebb and the late Mr Butcher would have suggested matter for reflection to the undiscriminating *laudator temporis acti*. The House of Commons has become more businesslike, responding with faithful reflection to a general tendency in every department of life and letters. We are less florid than our forefathers were: we do not write novels in the style of *Rienzi*, nor do we attempt, if we could, perorations of the diffuse eloquence demanded of the heroes of the past. Yet in cultivation, in natural eloquence, in the subtlety of dialectics, there are probably at least as large a number of Members entitled to a high place as have ever debated in the House of Commons at any period of its history.

Nothing, for instance, will persuade me that there has ever been a time in the history of the House of Commons in which Mr Balfour would not have reached the ascendency which has made him for so many years a unique figure in our Parliamentary Debates. Many people can speak better. I have never heard anyone who can think aloud so brilliantly, so spontaneously,

and so conclusively. I have heard him rise to speak on vital occasions where it was certain that every word, reported exactly as he uttered it, would be read and re-read by hundreds of thousands, with no notes except such as he had hurriedly scribbled on an envelope during the progress of the debate. Often his speech as delivered has produced a great impression, sometimes an extraordinary impression, but I have never heard Mr Balfour speak without reading his speech with a wonder infinitely greater; for its structure, its logical evolution, and its penetrating subtlety of thought always supply elements which help him very little at the moment just because it is not possible instantly to appreciate, while listening to him, their amazing excellence. Several people can make better extemporary speeches than Mr Balfour in the House of Commons, judged by their instantaneous impression, and many can make better ones upon the platform, but I have never heard anyone make better extemporary speeches than he, and I am certain that I never shall, judged, not by the impression of the moment upon an excited assembly, but by the far more searching criterion of the deliberate judgment of critical men.

In quite a different way Mr Asquith possesses unique parliamentary gifts. His methods, I am well aware, might very persuasively be cited in disproof of the protest already made against the correction of prolixity in debate. Mr Asquith seldom speaks for more than forty minutes, often, and on important occasions, for only half an hour, but it is given to few to bend the bow of Odysseus. He can confine his remarks within reasonable compass simply because he possesses the gift of never saying a word too much; he always has at his command not merely the appropriate but the inevitable word; and it is therefore never

necessary for him to use two words where one would express his meaning. Whether he has prepared his speech or whether he is speaking extempore, the one word is always swiftly available. He produces, wherever and whenever he wants them, an endless succession of perfectly coined sentences conceived with unmatched felicity, and delivered without hesitation in a parliamentary style which is at once the envy and the despair of imitators. He never perhaps takes a point very subtle, very recondite, very obviously out of the reach of the ordinary Member of the House of Commons. He lacks Mr Balfour's chief fascination, that of never taking part in the discussion of a great subject without illuminating it by rays of penetrating analysis wholly novel, wholly unattainable to the average Member, and yet immediately compelling attention and assent. But, on the other hand, he realises completely the merit of saying better in the House of Commons than anyone else in it what all his party are thinking, and of giving to their thoughts a felicitous and cogent expression of which they are incapable.

Mr Bonar Law employs methods of preparation which are, so far as I know, unique. In his most carefully prepared speeches he makes no notes, but formulates in his mind the sequence of his argument in the very words in which it is to be expressed, and then by a series of mental rehearsals makes himself as much master of the whole speech as if he read it from a manuscript on the table. It might have been supposed that such a method of preparation would have imposed an almost intolerable mental strain, but it appears to cause Mr Bonar Law neither trouble nor anxiety. And the present Session has conclusively shown that Mr Bonar Law can make extremely successful speeches on occasions on which no preparation was possible. Whether he is making a

carefully prepared or an extemporary speech he uses no notes whatever, and in neither case does he ever transgress in the slightest degree the exact proportional treatment which the immediate subject requires. Mr Bonar Law's style as a speaker is peculiar to himself: he is simple, perspicuous, and extremely cogent. Very few Latin words overload his sentences; indeed, his style and diction resemble those of the late Mr Bright more closely than those of any parliamentary speaker who has reached a great position in the interval between them. He possesses a pungency, and a degree of combative brilliancy, which have made the closing speeches of many a fierce party debate a scene of unmixed triumph to his delighted supporters. I have never, during my experience of the House of Commons, heard more successful fighting speeches than those with which he has wound up late at night the Unionist case in the more important debates of the last few months. And he is, in my judgment, only at the beginning of his successes. Until he became leader his interposition in debate was infrequent, and he had acquired the somewhat ambiguous reputation of an expert upon tariff questions. He makes better speeches on the tariff than anyone since Mr Chamberlain, but neither in knowledge nor in range is he a limited man, and successful as he has already proved himself, I think he has not entered even yet upon his parliamentary kingdom.

Mr Lloyd George is undoubtedly a speaker of extraordinary variety, *flair*, and plausibility. He has three wholly distinct styles of speech. The first is that of Limehouse; the second that of the House of Commons in an excited party debate; the third that of the House of Commons when he is concerned in forwarding business and conciliating criticism. His cleverness and address in the third method are beyond all praise. He thanks

his opponents for their assistance, he compliments them upon their public spirit, he accepts their co-operation with gratitude, and the whole proceeding is conducted with an ingratiating *bonhomie* which, at its best, is extraordinarily clever, if, at its worst, it recalls the emollient properties of highly-scented soap. His second style, that employed in the combative party speech in a full-dress debate, does not impress me equally. He is, indeed, a very adroit controversialist on these occasions, but the methods employed are a little crude. His speeches are wholly lacking in that literary quality which marks all the best House of Commons oratory, and when he trusts, as he sometimes does, to the eloquence of the moment, it is usually more that of the platform or the pulpit than of the House of Commons. He is beyond question a very powerful controversialist, but his special merits are to be found rather in his first or third styles than his second. I have never heard him speak on the platform to a great party audience, but I should imagine that amid these surroundings he is head and shoulders above any contemporary speaker. He is, in fact, an unmatched demagogue; but it is only fair to add that he is a demagogue not by affectation or from policy, but because he is the sincere mouthpiece of his antecedents and his temperament. His speeches at Limehouse and Newcastle were open to the gravest criticisms both on the ground of taste and in relation to their accuracy, but each of them was a formidable event. He has never been quite as effective since: his methods have become a little more unctuous and a little more slipshod. His prestige is somewhat impaired, and the atmosphere upon which he, almost more than any one, depends for the highest fulfilment of his powers has become in consequence somewhat blurred; but a politician who can do what Mr Lloyd

George has already done must always be reckoned with as a formidable and incalculable force.

In many ways I consider Mr Horatio Bottomley to be one of the most attractive speakers to whom I have ever listened. He certainly attains to a higher degree of excellence in three quite distinct types of speech than any speaker known to me. His House of Commons style was almost ideal. Self-possessed, quiet, irresistibly witty, and distinguished equally by common sense and tolerance, he made for himself a position in the House of Commons of which nothing but the loss of his seat would ever have deprived him. I am assured by good judges that he was, if possible, even more effective when addressing a great audience of many thousands, and as a forensic speaker I can say with long experience that his force, his persuasiveness, and the perfection of his form were unrivalled. Many men can speak well in the Law Courts who speak well nowhere else: some can speak well in the Law Courts and in the House of Commons: some, again, in the Law Courts and on the platform. I have never met any one who reached so high a degree of excellence in all three methods of speech. He united to a brilliant native humour a broad range of treatment, nerves of steel, an original outlook upon affairs, and an exact grasp of detail which hardly ever accompanies the other qualities. His removal from the House of Commons has impoverished the public stock of gaiety, of cleverness, and of common sense.

Mr Winston Churchill is a speaker of a wholly different type. He could not, of course, have made so great a reputation as a speaker without extraordinary ability, but equally I think he could not have done so if his perseverance and tenacity had been less dogged; for he hardly belongs to the class of orators who are

sometimes called "natural." He bestows upon his important speeches a degree of almost meticulous preparation: he elaborates and sometimes over-elaborates. Latterly an excessive dependence upon his manuscript has a little impaired the parliamentary success of some of his most important speeches, but his hearers enjoy the compensating qualities of these defects. His speeches are marked by an arresting literary quality. Some of his phrases are scarcely less happy than those of Disraeli; and nearly all his carefully considered speeches bear the impress of deep and fruitful thought. He is more instinct with the House of Commons spirit than any of the new generation. He has brooded deeply upon the records of parliamentary oratory, has analysed with inexhaustible patience the temperament of the House of Commons, and will perhaps recall to a generation which has almost forgotten them the parliamentary standards and modes of expression amid which Mr Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr Chaplin served their apprenticeship.

Eight years ago Mr Winston Churchill and Lord Hugh Cecil were intimates, confederates, and, in a sense, rivals. Lord Hugh was then, and is now, a far more spontaneous speaker than Mr Churchill, and he has other qualities which, so far as I know, no one in the House of Commons but himself possesses. He unites to the most tenacious combativeness an idealism of view which even those who are most affronted by his controversial bitterness admit in their hearts. Indeed, nothing is more striking than to observe how the Government Benches, almost unable to control their disagreeable anticipations when Lord Hugh rises to speak, are compelled in spite of themselves to listen and often even to sympathise with an outlook upon affairs which has so little in common with their own.

APPENDIX

(*Letter to "The Times," 2nd July* 1912)

THE UNIONIST HOUSING BILL

Sir,—Indications are not wanting that the Government contemplates an attempt to shift the venue of their trial whenever it takes place in the constituencies.

Home Rule, the Franchise Bill, and the Welsh Church Bill are, it would appear, bad electioneering business. The General Election, when it takes place, will be fought not upon such inconvenient issues, but upon the revival of the Battle of Limehouse. Certain underlings of the Liberal Party, wholly undistinguished in the House of Commons, and apparently incapable of putting forward any intelligible Parliamentary explanation of their peculiar views, have, it is understood, gained the ear of a Minister who has every motive (if it be practicable) to raise the value of his political stock. The outcome, we are told, is to be a new land programme involving, amongst other proposals, a comprehensive measure of housing reform, applicable alike to town and country.

Such a proposal must, of course, proceed from the Government, and it cannot be carried through the House of Commons except as one of the principal measures of the Session. It is therefore not altogether irrelevant to recall the existing commitments of the Government. They are pledged to carry into law the Home Rule Bill, the Welsh Church Bill, a Franchise Bill to be followed by a Redistribution Bill, and a measure for the reconstitution of the House of Lords. But this is not all. The Prime Minister has specifically bound himself to pass through the present House

of Commons a Licensing Bill "as drastic as the last," and an Education Bill to remedy the "grievances" of the passive resister.

It is, I imagine, obvious that an ambitious land programme cannot be added to these commitments with any hope that it will find a place upon the Statute-book in the lifetime of this Parliament. Its object, in other words, will be not to abolish slums, but to gain votes. The Government cannot afford to destroy slums; they require them for their perorations. The hypocrisy of their professions is vividly illustrated by their treatment of the Unionist Housing Bill.

Everything valuable in this Bill has now been killed by the action of Ministers and their friends. You will therefore perhaps allow me to pronounce a funeral oration over it. The Bill started its career as a wide, drastic, and comprehensive measure for dealing with the admitted defects of our present housing legislation and administration; it survives under the pressure of the President of the Local Government Board, and of the single-tax lunatics as a mere simulacrum of any social policy.

The Bill, as introduced in December 1911, and re-introduced in February 1912, was not devoid of substantial expert backing. It was drafted and backed by Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen, for two years chairman of the London County Council Housing Committee; by Colonel Kyffin Taylor, chairman of the Liverpool Housing Committee; by the Hon. Walter Guinness, ex-chairman of the London County Council Housing Committee; by Mr Charles Bathurst, who is by common consent one of the best known authorities on rural housing in the House of Commons; by Mr Montague Barlow, Lord Henry Bentinck, Mr Waldorf Astor, Mr J. W. Hills, Lord Wolmer, and Mr Harold Smith, all of them well known for their interest in and knowledge of the social problems of to-day. These members of the House made extended tours to the nine important municipalities in order to gather the opinions and collate the experience of the local authorities, and drafted their Bill to meet the requirements of the special localities. The proposals they finally embodied in the Bill were supported by practically every housing association in the country, including the National Housing and Town Planning Council, the Rural Housing Association, the National Land and Home League, and the Workmen's Housing Council.

An impartial person will admit that a Bill which commanded such general support, and was vouched by such expert knowledge, was worthy at least of the respectful consideration of his Majesty's Ministers.

It is hardly necessary to say that it did not receive such consideration from these new housing enthusiasts.

When the second reading was moved by Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen and Mr Charles Bathurst, on 15th March, it was at once opposed in the most violent language, not only by the single-tax March hares represented by Mr Wedgwood or the self-advertising section represented by Mr Booth, but by the President of the Local Government Board himself. Mr Burns referred to the backers of the Bill and the expert associations and local authorities behind them as "economic fledglings from East-end settlements who thought that the last word on housing reform had been spoken when they had delivered a speech after they had motored through a London slum in a taxi-cab." This cheap and insolent sneer has been resented deeply by men of all parties, who have forgotten more about housing reform than Mr John Burns ever learnt. These men have been struggling for many years to improve the conditions of the working classes, while the President of the Local Government Board has been bawling to the universe in vain and prolix speeches that it is impertinent even to offer a suggestion upon housing matters to a Department which is dignified by a President at once so enterprising and so modest.

Fortunately we were able to depend on the support of a few sincere housing reformers on the Liberal and Labour benches. On behalf of the Unionist Social Reform Committee I should like to thank those members habitually opposed to us in politics who have been our constant supporters in this matter. Mr Burns was apparently warned by the Government Whips that he would be defeated if he moved the rejection of the Bill on second reading. Not being courageous enough to face this contingency, he and the Government front bench indulged in the mean and cowardly trick of supporting Mr Booth's proposal for referring the Bill, not to a Standing Committee, but to a Committee of the whole House—a motion tantamount to rejection. They were publicly rebuffed by the determination of the House, and in spite of their opposition the Bill passed to Standing Committee A.

The less experienced supporters of the measure imagined that their difficulties were over until the Report stage. They were mistaken. The hostility of Liberalism to any measure of social reform which is not recommended by the spirit of class-hatred was by no means abated. The main proposals of the Bill were to establish Housing Commissioners under the Local Government Board, and to give an Imperial grant of half a million accompanied by real powers to compel local authorities to do their duty in exchange for the grant. The Chancellor of the Exchequer refused the grant, and the three main clauses of the Bill became at once inoperative. A somewhat heated debate ensued, Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen, Mr Hills, and others protesting against the mutilation of the Bill. Many Liberals at once began a policy of obstruction, which they continued throughout the Committee stage, the worst offenders being Mr Jonathan Samuel, M.P. for Stockton, Mr Handel Booth, M.P. for Pontefract, Mr Wedgwood, M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Mr King, M.P. for North Somerset. All these gentlemen will be reminded in their constituencies of the zeal they displayed for housing reform. At length Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen and his friends announced that thay had no course open to them but to allow the first three clauses to be deleted and attempt to pass what was left of the Bill. A division was taken, and the first clause, that for the appointment of Housing Commissions, was struck out by thirty to fifteen, every Liberal, Labour, and Nationalist member voting with the Government.

After this, although the promoters agreed to practically every suggestion on the part of the Government, seeing that nothing but the minor clauses of the Bill remained, obstruction became rampant. The promoters abandoned, in deference to Ministerial objections, Clause 8, which dealt with compensation for demolition in cases where the owner undertook not to build without the consent of the local authority—a clause taken from the Liverpool Private Act and strongly recommended by the Liverpool authorities. No concession could appease the hostility of the Liberal Anti-Social Reformers. The Committee sat for no less than six more days, and its opponents divided against the Bill fifteen times. Mr Jonathan Samuel distinguished himself most (or at least most often) as an obstructionist, and on the clause dealing with the relaxation of by-laws, which was discussed on no less than four

days, he succeeded in making the same speech (which showed much ignorance of the subject) six times. Messrs Booth, Wedgwood, King, and Martin were nearly as bad, and one of the worst offenders was Mr Burns himself, who made second reading speeches of twenty minutes' duration on several of the amendments. In the end the only vital clause of the Bill which went through was that which provided against the owner of a slum claiming undue compensation for overcrowded premises; and even this clause was fought bitterly by the single-taxers. The history of the Bill on Report is short. The Liberals took good care that it never came up for discussion by obstructing a minor measure which stood immediately before it on the Order Paper.

I do not know that in any case the exiguous remainder of the Bill is worth saving. But I do know this. There has never in my Parliamentary experience been such a flagrant instance of obstruction to a considered measure of social reform as that with which the Liberal Party has just presented us. We now know what the real attitude of Liberals on housing reform is, and the country will realise what their professions are worth. They have killed our Bill at the expense of the working classes in a fit of party spite and jealousy. We shall remove the issue to the constituencies, and ask them to decide which is the party of social reform—the men who introduced the Housing Bill or the men who killed it.

On this point it is useless for the country to trust to the present Government. Mr Burns tells us that there is no further need of housing legislation. Mr Lloyd George explains in an interview that the one thing to do is "to clear out the slums." When the Opposition brings forward a measure to facilitate the clearing of the slums Mr Burns opposes it, and, when defeated in the division lobby, gets Mr Lloyd George to refuse the money necessary to give effect to the Bill. There is not much to choose between open opposition to housing reform and furtive obstruction to its operation. The Unionist Party at any rate will pursue its traditional policy on housing reform, and leave the verdict to the country. We are concerned with the condition of the people, not with the public disagreements of the President of the Local Government Board and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr Lloyd George now seems in the mood to challenge us on the

question of rural housing and rural conditions. I can assure him that the Unionist Party is ready to take up that particular gage of battle, and will not be backward in reminding him and his party of their conduct on the Housing Bill of the Unionist Social Reform Committee.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

F. E. Smith.

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